

# Mormon Primer on Belief:

## The Examination of the Controversial Issues of Mormonism from an objective position

### Introduction:

The major aim of writing this article is to display various perspectives on Mormonism's most controversial issues. Herein, we share the Orthodox, Apologetic, Critical, and Progressive viewpoints together with resources helpful to the reader at the end of each chapter, that the reader may explore each issue further.

### Issues

1: Treasure Digging and Folk Magic of Joseph Smith and His Family

2: Joseph Smith's First Vision

3: Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

4: The Book of Mormon Historicity

5: The Book of Abraham

6: The Prophetic Mantle

7: Science

8: Tithing

9: The Word of Wisdom

10: The True and Living Church

11: Joseph Smith's Practice of Polygamy

12: Polygamy after Joseph Smith

13: The Cessation of Polygamy

14: The Role of Women throughout Church History

15: Temples and Freemasonry

16: Scripture

17: The Race Based Priesthood and Temple Ban

18: Spiritual Witness as a Mode of Knowing Truth

19: Historical Jesus



## **Chapter 1 : Treasure Digging and Folk Magic of Joseph Smith and His Family**

### Orthodox View :

The view among Orthodox members is that Joseph Smith had only trivial involvement in treasure digging. The two quotes most often used within Church publications is Joseph Smith's own third person statement about himself:

*"Was not Joseph Smith a money digger? Yes, but it was never a very profitable job for him, as he only got fourteen dollars a month for it."* - Joseph Smith<sup>1</sup>

And this quote by Joseph Smith:

*"I continued to work for nearly a month, without success in our undertaking, and finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging after it. Hence, arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger."* - Joseph Smith<sup>2</sup>

General membership has never had the term "treasure digging" defined<sup>3</sup> at length and the explanations given leave much room for misunderstanding. The details are always told in a way that implies Joseph was hired with other men to use shovels to dig for treasure at the behest of others who direct where and how these digs take place. The following example is found in a Church periodical:

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Smith, *Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* [Kirtland, Ohio] 2 no. 3 (July 1838), 43. Also reproduced in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 120; *History of the Church* 3:29; *Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 271.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1.11?lang=eng>

<sup>3</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scrying>

*His [Joseph Smith's] judgment and good sense were continuing to develop, because in the year he turned twenty he was able to persuade his employer to quit digging for treasure. Joseph had gone to work for Josiah Stool for fourteen dollars a month. Along with many people in this part of New York, Mr. Stool dug for buried treasure.<sup>4</sup>*

This presents Joseph as just a hireling, while Mr. Stool (Josiah Stowell) is the key figure pursuing treasure digging. The average member has little awareness of folk magic practices by the Smith family<sup>5</sup> and, by extension, folk magic practiced by a number of individuals in the greater Palmyra area. There are only cursory mentions of any treasure diggers in the Palmyra area with the focus of such being on Sally Chase and her effort to locate the gold plates on the Smith property through the use of her “green glass through which she could see many wonderful things”<sup>6</sup> The general membership is left to think there is little noteworthy of Joseph’s treasure digging, the folk magic practices of the Smith family, or the Palmyra area in general.

#### Critical View :

The Critic declares Joseph’s treasure digging to be vast and expansive. Dan Vogel, a scholar of Mormonism, reports at least 17 treasure digging sites in the Palmyra area<sup>7</sup>. Joseph Smith was involved with many of these sites. However, Joseph was not hired to shovel where directed, but rather, he was hired for his skill of locating treasure; which he did by placing a peep stone in a hat, burying his face into the hat and telling others where to dig. These treasure digs were not small holes, but massive caves dug into the side of a hill<sup>8</sup>. Each time the men thought they drew close, Joseph would inform them he could see in the stone that the Spanish gold or silver they sought had slipped further into the earth and, hence, no treasure was ever obtained. Folk magic practices of that time dictated that hidden treasures were protected by guardian spirits who could be thwarted off by magic spells, incantations<sup>9</sup>, and animal sacrifices<sup>10</sup>. The Critic points out that Joseph got his first seer stone in 1819 at age 13, one year prior to the first vision<sup>11</sup>. He later found his second seer stone, the one used for the Book of Mormon translation, in 1822, only one year before his first visit from Moroni. The Critic also would have

---

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.lds.org/new-era/1971/01/joseph-smith-as-a-young-man?lang=eng>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.conchisle.com/magic.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Smith, History of Joseph Smith, 150, 149.

<sup>7</sup> [http://undergroundnotes.com/graphics7/Dialogue\\_V27N03\\_211.pdf](http://undergroundnotes.com/graphics7/Dialogue_V27N03_211.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://rationalfaiths.com/discovering-the-lost-mormon-cave/>

<sup>9</sup> <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/review/18/1/S00005-5176a9476bf735McGee.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Emily Coburn, in Emily M. Austin, Mormonism; or, Life Among the Mormons, 1882, pp. 32-33

<sup>11</sup> Brodie, Fawn M. (1971), No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith (2nd ed.), New York: Knopf, ISBN 0-394-46967-4.

it known that one of Joseph's treasure digs, unrelated to the Nephite plates, took place on the hill Cumorah. Joseph is also believed to have been mentored in treasure digging by a scryer named Luman Walters. One source says:

*In 1822 and 1823, Luman Walter served as a seer for a treasure dig on the property of Abner Cole in Palmyra, Wayne County, New York. Joseph Smith, Sr., Alvin Smith, and Joseph Smith, Jr. reportedly participated in this dig. Walter possessed a magical book and a seer stone, which he used to locate buried treasure. Walter is said to have conducted three unsuccessful digs on the hill Cumorah, but later suggests that only Smith might be able to find the treasure there.*

The Critic also points out that the Smith family was heavily involved in folk magic practices such as water witching, scrying and magic incantations, and as already discussed, treasure digging. Lorenzo Saunders, a neighbor of the Smiths, shared that Joseph Smith's father, Joseph Smith Sr.:

*"was always telling yarns, he would go to turkey shoots and get tight [i.e., drunk] and he would pretend to put spells on their guns and would tell them they could not shoot a turkey."*

The Critic uses all this information to show that Joseph's story of Moroni and gold plates is simply a continuation of his pattern for deceiving others regarding buried treasure and the magical devices he used to locate that treasure. Moroni, gold plates, seer stones, and the Hill Cumorah resemble the treasure digging culture of Joseph Smith's youth, his family, and his community is too much to be a coincidence for the critic.

#### Apologetic View :

The Apologists suggests that the prevalence of treasure digging in Palmyra's culture was not unusual or strange in spite of one's modern prejudices when first encountering this information. Such practices could be comparable to today's gambling in a casino or buying a lottery ticket. The Apologetic view maintains that angels, gold plates buried in a hill, and a urim and thummim seer stone are demonstrably different articles than hidden spanish silver mines, peep stones, caves dug into hills, and spirit guardians of buried treasure.

#### Progressive View :

The Progressive viewpoint acknowledges that the similarities between Joseph's earlier treasure digging and his experience with Moroni and the Gold Plates is discomforting and the questions of such are valid based on the documents and the historical context we have. Some

Progressive perspectives would allow the possibility that Joseph, in his youth, deceived people out of money by letting them pay him to locate treasure. Treasure he claimed to see with his seer stone, but never uncovered, and never was found to exist. Notwithstanding these events, the Progressive would ask that we pause and recognize that God often works through the weak to bring about his purposes.<sup>12</sup> We cannot expect a prophet to be a person of superior morality and righteousness.<sup>13</sup> We can concede that our modern view of 19th century folk magic may be insensitive and judgemental of practices that were mostly common to the people of Palmyra, New York and an early 1800's frontier culture. A Progressive View could even allow for the treasure digging of Joseph's youth to have been utilized by God to prepare him to act in faith regarding the angel Moroni and the Gold Plates. Joseph, as a young man who believes in things that are unseen, might more easily have the necessary faith for the work God was about to do.

### Resources For Personal Research

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith/Money\\_digging](http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Money_digging)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/gold.htm>

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V19N04\\_20a.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V19N04_20a.pdf)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early\\_life\\_of\\_Joseph\\_Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_life_of_Joseph_Smith)

<http://www.mormonstories.org/top10toughissues/peepstones.html>

[http://undergroundnotes.com/graphics7/Dialogue\\_V27N03\\_211.pdf](http://undergroundnotes.com/graphics7/Dialogue_V27N03_211.pdf)

<https://bycommonconsent.com/2006/09/09/treasure-digging/>

[http://richkelsey.org/joseph\\_smith\\_money\\_digging\\_accounts.html](http://richkelsey.org/joseph_smith_money_digging_accounts.html)

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2015/09/seer-stones-folk-magic-and-alvins-hand/>

<http://mormonhistoricsites.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/Reconsidering-Lucy-Mack-Smith%E2%80%99s-Folk-Magic-Confession.pdf>

---

<sup>12</sup> Alma 37:7

<sup>13</sup> D&C 1:24-28



## **Chapter 2 : Joseph Smith's First Vision**

### **Orthodox View:**

This view professes that there was religious excitement in Joseph's neck of the woods and that he was wrestling with which church was true. Joseph came across James 1:5 and this scripture had a deep impact on him. This consequently led to him going into a grove of trees near his home and pleading to know which church was true. After a short interaction with the adversary, Joseph saw a pillar of light, and in that light, descended two personages, God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. They spoke to him and informed him that none of the churches on the earth were true and that the creeds of those churches were an abomination to Them. They informed Joseph that he would play a part in the restoration of the Lord's gospel back on the Earth. In the end, the Orthodox View holds that what the official 1838 account says happened, is what happened. Any differences in other accounts are inconsequential.

### **Critical View:**

The Critic of the First Vision points out that there are four separate first hand accounts<sup>14</sup> recorded (not to mention several second and third hand accounts), and that these accounts contradict in ways that are irreconcilable. Joseph's environment, his motives, his experience, and even who appeared are all dramatically different in the four accounts. These contradictions confirm to the critic that Joseph nefariously altered the telling of his experience

---

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision>

to match his changing theology<sup>15</sup> and to establish his credibility in the midst of criticism that he had fallen. That in the end, his story of spiritual experience in a grove is fiction<sup>16</sup>.

### Apologetic View:

One Apologetic View minimizes the differences between versions by suggesting two main reconciliations. The first is to simply state that the differences are not as serious as the critic purports<sup>17</sup>. The second expands on the first with explanations of the differences. Explanations include false memories, differing audiences, and varying levels of comfortability sharing his experience<sup>18</sup>. In the end, the Apologetic view recognizes there are differences in the four first hand accounts, but is searching for ways to reconcile those differences with the 1838 account, which must prevail as the most accurate description.

### Progressive View:

The Progressive view accepts that Joseph had an encounter with the divine in the grove. A Progressive member likely gives weight to the 1832 account over other accounts for several reasons. The 1832 account is the earliest recording of the experience, making it closest to the actual event. The 1832 account was written by Joseph's own hand, in his own personal journal. There was no audience to play up to, no need to embellish or frame in a particular way, no need to record it in any way other than how it actually occurred. The Progressive View would argue that the 1832 account is the most authentic experience. Richard Bushman says the following about the 1832 account and many Progressive members would say amen to such a perspective:

*"I am very much impressed by Joseph Smith's 1832 History account of his early visions. This is the one partially written in his own hand and the rest dictated to Frederick G. Williams. I think it is more revealing than the official account presumably written in 1838 and contained in the Pearl of Great Price. We don't know who wrote the 1838 account. Joseph's journal indicates that he, Sidney Rigdon, and George Robinson collaborated on beginning the history in late April, but we don't know who actually drafted the history. It is a polished narrative but unlike anything Joseph ever wrote himself. The 1832 history we know is his because of the handwriting. It comes rushing forth from Joseph's mind in a gush of words that seem artless*

---

<sup>15</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V38N02\\_13.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V38N02_13.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V26N04\\_19.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N04_19.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/The\\_First\\_Vision.pdf](https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/The_First_Vision.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/volume-12-number-1-2011/seekers-guide-historical-accounts-joseph-smiths-first-vision>



*and uncalculated, a flood of raw experience. I think this account has the marks of an authentic visionary experience. There is the distance from God, the perplexity and yearning for answers, the perplexity, and then the experience itself which brings intense joy, followed by fear and anxiety. Can he deal with the powerful force he has encountered? Is he worthy and able? It is a classic announcement of a prophet's call, and I find it entirely believable.”* - Richard Bushman<sup>19</sup>

### Resources For Personal Research

<https://www.lds.org/topics/first-vision-accounts?lang=eng&old=true>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/06/premium-first-vision-founding-event-restoration/>

<http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision>

<http://www.mormonthink.com/firstvisionweb.htm>

[http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue\\_larson\\_another\\_look\\_at\\_joseph\\_smith%27s\\_first\\_vision\\_\(2\).pdf](http://www.jamesjudithmconkie.com/uploads/3/8/0/8/38081735/dialogue_larson_another_look_at_joseph_smith%27s_first_vision_(2).pdf)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith%27s\\_First\\_Vision/Accounts](http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith%27s_First_Vision/Accounts)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First\\_Vision](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Vision)

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/exploring-first-vision/1-earliest-documented-accounts-joseph-smith-s-first-vision>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/06/premium-first-vision-founding-event-restoration/>

---

<sup>19</sup> [https://www.reddit.com/r/exmormon/comments/1sp4mi/ama\\_series\\_richard\\_bushman\\_dec\\_16\\_300\\_400\\_pm\\_est/](https://www.reddit.com/r/exmormon/comments/1sp4mi/ama_series_richard_bushman_dec_16_300_400_pm_est/)



### **Chapter 3 : Witnesses of the Book of Mormon**

#### **Orthodox View :**

One of the evidences for the Book of Mormon is its eleven witnesses. The Church teaches that three of those witnesses had a spiritual experience affirming to them the truthfulness of the scriptural text<sup>20</sup>. They were visited by the angelic messenger, Moroni, who showed them the Gold Plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated along with other items that were buried in the ground with the plates, for over a thousand years prior to Joseph Smith's retrieving and translating them. Contrastingly, the eight witnesses met together with Joseph Smith in the woods, where they described a very physical experience of hefting the metal plates and viewing the reformed egyptian characters upon the pages. The Church teaches that these eleven men were consistent in their testimonies and never retracted their witness statements<sup>21</sup>. The average member is only aware of the witness statements found in the front of the Book of Mormon. The Church rarely exposes its members to the numerous statements made by some of the eleven witnesses, and so many suppose there is little beyond the printed witness statements contained in the Book of Mormon.

#### **Critical View :**

The Critic of both the Book of Mormon witness statements and the narrative taught regarding the witnesses will point to several statements and quotes in which the witnesses contradict

<sup>20</sup>[lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-and-church-history-seminary-teacher-manual-2014/section-01/lesson-21?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/doctrine-and-covenants-and-church-history-seminary-teacher-manual-2014/section-01/lesson-21?lang=eng)

<sup>21</sup>[lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-joseph-fielding-smith/chapter-9-witnesses-of-the-book-of-mormon?lang=eng](https://www.lds.org/manual/teachings-of-presidents-of-the-church-joseph-fielding-smith/chapter-9-witnesses-of-the-book-of-mormon?lang=eng)

themselves.<sup>22</sup> More than one witness contradicts himself on whether the experience was seen with his natural eyes or with spiritual eyes. The witnesses are also quoted contradicting themselves on whether the experience was a physical experience or only visionary and whether they were permitted to hold the plates or only view them under a cloth or perhaps heft them while covered or in a box. The Critic would show the three witnesses to be inconsistent in their rationality and would point to the eleven witnesses all being related by family and/or marriage.<sup>23</sup> The critic would also point out that these eleven men were as a general statement, very superstitious, involved to one degree or another in Folk Magic and/or Treasure Digging.

#### Apologetic View :

The apologist for the eleven witnesses would have us believe the contradictions only come about when we trust less credible 2nd and 3rd hand testimonies. That when the witnesses are seen in their totality, these men were seen as honest upright contributing members of their society. Many of them held public positions in their community and their word was trusted. The Apologist perspective would point out that many of these men, including the three witnesses who each were excommunicated, had times where they disagreed with the direction of the Church and the Prophet Joseph Smith himself while remaining faithful to their testimony of their witness experience.<sup>24</sup>

#### Progressive View :

The Progressive perspective would acknowledge both sides have merit. Martin Harris for instance would be seen as constantly changing his belief system and faith community throughout his life.<sup>25</sup> That all the living witnesses except Oliver Cowdery in 1844 after the Death of Joseph Smith placed their faith in James Strang (Convert who just after the martyrdom, claimed he was Joseph's Successor) for a season. These were people who were superstitious. They were involved in folk magic using seer stones, divining or witching rods, while at the same time being generally respected and found to be trustworthy men. Some of their statements are contradictory and the Progressive perspective would both validate that while also acknowledging that these men may have struggled to understand the nature of their experience and may have vacillated in their understanding of what happened. In the end, as

---

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/vogelwitnesses.htm>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/witnessesweb.htm>

<sup>24</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Mormon/Witnesses](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Mormon/Witnesses)

<sup>25</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V19N04\\_31.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V19N04_31.pdf)

you will see by the following Chapter on the Book of Mormon historicity, that this issue simply does not change the ground the Progressive holds of the Book of Mormon being a sacred scriptural text.

### Resources For Personal Research

<http://www.mormonthink.com/witnessesweb.htm>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Mormon/Witnesses](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Mormon/Witnesses)

[http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Book\\_of\\_Mormon\\_Witnesses](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Book_of_Mormon_Witnesses)

<http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/witnesses.html>

[http://www.scottwoodward.org/Talks/html/z-Scholarly%20Articles/AndersonRL\\_BookOfMormonWitnesses.html](http://www.scottwoodward.org/Talks/html/z-Scholarly%20Articles/AndersonRL_BookOfMormonWitnesses.html)

<http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865629099/The-plates-of-the-Book-of-Mormon-As-material-as-anything-can-be.html>



## **Chapter 4 : Book of Mormon Historicity**

### Orthodox View :

The Book of Mormon is believed by its general membership to be entirely an ancient document. That it contains the literal history of an ancient people who left Jerusalem and came to the Americas and split into two nations (Lamanites and Nephites ) at war with each other. It speaks as a second witness of Christ as the resurrected Jesus visits these people in a miraculous recorded visit to the Americas within the book. It adds a second witness to some biblical events like the Tower of Babel and it confirms the Bible as a scriptural text with its authors reusing Isaiah along with other biblical themes. Mormons hold the Book of Mormon as more trustworthy than the bible and a more accurate translation of its original text than the bible's. The general membership sees Joseph Smith, the book's "translator", as a facilitator only in translating the text from Reformed Egyptian to English by "the Gift and Power of God".

### Critical View :

The Critic sees the Book of Mormon as a complete 19th century fraud. They point to Anachronisms like horses, swine, cattle, barley, wheat, chariots, silk, windows and many others.<sup>26</sup> They point to the Book of Mormon's near word for word quoting of large sections of the 1769 KJV Bible, which Joseph Smith grew up with.<sup>27</sup> They point the theology within the Book of mormon matching closely with the documented religious debates in Joseph Smith's

---

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/book-of-mormon-problems.htm>

<sup>27</sup> <https://user.xmission.com/~research/central/2biblicaltxts.pdf>

day and even in his own hometown.<sup>28</sup> They point to the archaeology and how not one single discovery has been made that can be pointed definitively as evidence of the Book of Mormon's narrative and historicity. They point how closely the Book of mormon text matches the writing style of 19th century books like the Late War, The First book of Napoleon, View of the Hebrews, and others. In the end, they see the evidence as overwhelming that the Book of Mormon comes from the 19th century utilizing Joseph Smith's experiences and the very issue and details from his own milieu.<sup>29</sup>

### Apologetic View :

Apologists for the Book of Mormon point to data that make space for faith that the Book of Mormon is an ancient document. Matching up early portions of the Book of Mormon that take place in Israel to actual Israel geography<sup>30</sup>, showing that within the Book of Mormon, some cultural practices match up closely with the practices of the Jewish culture at the time. They point to writing styles like Chiasmus as evidence of an ancient document.<sup>31</sup> They speak to hebrew connections within the Book of Mormon narrative.<sup>32</sup> In the end, they also hold up one having a spiritual witness as the ultimate evidence of the book's truthfulness.

### Progressive View :

One holding the Progressive perspective would acknowledge that much within the Book of Mormon can only be explained as a 19th century product. They agree with the critic that the Book can not be explained away as entirely an ancient document. For instance, renowned LDS Scholar Richard Bushman states:

*"the fact that there's phrasing everywhere, long phrases ( in the Book of Mormon)that if you Google them, you'll find them in 19th century writings. The theology of the Book of Mormon is very much 19th century theology, and it reads like a 19th century understanding of the Hebrew bible, as an Old Testament: that is, it has Christ in it, the way Protestants saw Christ everywhere in the Old Testament." - Richard Bushman<sup>33</sup>*

Some Progressive viewpoints, like that of Bushman above, still maintain that at least some portions of the Book of Mormon are still of ancient origin and that it is a convergence of an ancient scriptural text and its prophetic translator. Other Progressive viewpoints accept the

---

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/QuinnPaperless.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.exmormonfoundation.org/files/BookofMormon07.PDF>

<sup>30</sup> <http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/10/2/S00008-50e5e94d04c218Aston.pdf>

<sup>31</sup> [http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3004&context=physics\\_facpub](http://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3004&context=physics_facpub)

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/tvedtnes-HebrewNames.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2015/11/perspectives-richard-bushman/>

Book of Mormon entirely as a 19th century product, and at the same time, still sustain it as scripture and binding to them and their community as a sacred text. They see it serving its purpose in connecting us to the divine as a communal Holy Writ, much in the same way that the Bhagavad Gita does for the Hindu tradition. They simply would argue as Adam Miller, LDS Scholar, does when he speaks of the idea of focusing on the concepts of the Book of Mormon rather than praying and worrying about the historicity of its proposed authors. That in doing so, he states that:

*this transformation has also been profoundly ordinary and it has revolved around God trying to get me to stop speculating about other worlds and far off places and supernatural events and to, instead, pay attention to what's happening right now, in this world, right in front of my own eyes. - Adam miller<sup>34</sup>*

He also adds that:

*Mormonism comes into focus as living and true only when we stop looking directly at it and, instead, aim our attention at what Mormonism is itself aiming at. If you aim right at Mormonism itself, you'll miss seeing the thing that is crucial with respect to deciding whether it deserves your enduring fidelity. - Adam Miller<sup>35</sup>*

The Progressive would argue that whether the Book of Mormon is historical means little in terms of spiritual growth and development. What really matters is if the teachings of the Book are mediating an interaction between the reader and God.

### Resources For Personal Research

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_authenticity\\_of\\_the\\_Book\\_of\\_Mormon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_authenticity_of_the_Book_of_Mormon)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Mormon/Historicity](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Mormon/Historicity)

<https://www.lds.org/topics/book-of-mormon-and-dna-studies?lang=eng&old=true>

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/faithpromotingrumor/2013/01/some-problems-with-book-of-mormon-historicity/>

<https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/mapping-book-of-mormon-historicity-debates-a-guide-for-the-overwhelmed-part-i/>

<http://www.mormonthink.com/book-of-mormon-problems.htm>

[http://www.i4m.com/think/intro/book\\_of\\_mormon.htm](http://www.i4m.com/think/intro/book_of_mormon.htm)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V26N03\\_163.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V26N03_163.pdf)

<http://www.exmormonfoundation.org/files/BookofMormon07.PDF>

---

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.timesandseasons.org/harchive/2014/10/letter-to-a-ces-student/>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.timesandseasons.org/harchive/2014/10/letter-to-a-ces-student/>





## **Chapter 5 : The Book of Abraham**

### **Orthodox View:**

The Book of Abraham has been held by Latter-day Saints as scripture ever since becoming accepted as canon by common consent in 1851.<sup>36</sup> More than that, Latter-day Saints have held the Book of Abraham as the literal writing of Abraham that were upon some Egyptian papyri that came into Joseph Smith's possession in 1835 in Kirtland. Joseph taught that this papyri contained the writings of the prophet Abraham, written by his own hand.<sup>37</sup> Our canon includes Joseph's translation of the facsimiles that were upon the papyrus. The Book of Abraham is part of Mormon scripture and holds deep value as such to Orthodox Latter-day Saints as a literal translation straight from the papyri.

### **Critical View:**

Critics of the Book of Abraham point to several translation problems. First, it should be noted that at least part of the papyrus that Joseph worked with still exists, and while it had been thought to have been destroyed in the great Chicago fire of 1871, it turned back up in the mid

<sup>36</sup> [http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Pearl\\_of\\_Great\\_Price](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Pearl_of_Great_Price)

<sup>37</sup> "The Book of Abraham" *Times and Seasons* 3 (1842): 704. KEPA 4



20th century.<sup>38</sup> With a portion of the papyri in existence and the advancement of being able to now translate Egyptian, scholars can make some verifiable conclusions. The papyri is not the writing of Abraham. It is a standard Egyptian Funerary text dated long after Abraham would have lived. The text appears to be completely unrelated to Abraham and the Facsimiles were translated incorrectly by Joseph based on an understanding of Egyptian. By Scholarly standards, Joseph got essentially everything wrong with the translation.

### Apologetic View:

Apologists for the Book of Abraham acknowledge that based on Egyptian Scholarship, the general consensus is that Joseph got a lot wrong.<sup>39</sup> They validate that the papyri is dated long after Abraham and is not in his handwriting. They acknowledge by Egyptian translation standards that Joseph got the Facsimiles wrong as well and the “Kirtland Egyptian papers”<sup>40</sup> are translated incorrectly based on the standard Egyptian translation. Their response to such is that while Joseph got dozens and dozens of things wrong with the papyri, there are two instances that he gets what they call a “hit” of sorts regarding the interpretation of the four canopic jars on facsimile 2 along with the meaning of the crocodile god.<sup>41</sup> LDS.ORG and some scholars also argue that part of the papyri is likely still missing since one account recalls the papyri being long enough to run from one end of the mansion house to the other and what we have is much too small to be represented by that statement.<sup>42</sup> It has also been offered by LDS.ORG and some scholars that rather than translating the actual papyri as Joseph thought he was doing, that God used the papyri as a catalyst for the Book of Abraham.<sup>43</sup> In other words, God allowed Joseph to think he was getting the Book of Abraham off the papyri even though they were unrelated, so that Joseph would be more able to exercise faith and receive the scriptural text.

### Progressive Perspective:

Some Progressive views take into account that the data seems very clear that Joseph is translating the portion of the papyri that is known to exist. That Joseph seems to get a lot wrong in the translation and even the “hits” that apologists bring up seem extremely flawed and weak. This perspective acknowledges the translation is a mess and prefers to focus on the

---

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V03N02\\_94.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V03N02_94.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Abraham/Joseph\\_Smith\\_Papyri/Facsimiles](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham/Joseph_Smith_Papyri/Facsimiles)

<sup>40</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland\\_Egyptian\\_papers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kirtland_Egyptian_papers)

<sup>41</sup> [http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ\\_Abraham2.shtml](http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/FQ_Abraham2.shtml)

<sup>42</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Abraham/Joseph\\_Smith\\_Papyri/Text/Size\\_of\\_missing\\_papyrus](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham/Joseph_Smith_Papyri/Text/Size_of_missing_papyrus)

<sup>43</sup> <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/enigmaticmirror/2013/08/26/catalyst-theory-of-the-book-of-abraham/>

result, the actual Book of Abraham text. That regardless of the translation issues and perhaps even in spite of issues with historicity, that the Book of Abraham is still scripture. Scripture in the sense that it is accepted as canon by our faith community through common consent and it inspires us and encourages us to have experiences with the Divine. One holding this Progressive view would not find the historicity or the translation as a hill to die on, but rather would focus on the what the Book of Abraham text does for them spiritually.

### Resources For Personal Research

<https://www.lds.org/topics/translation-and-historicity-of-the-book-of-abraham?lang=eng&old=true>

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B0hUiQEoqPAGc0hpOHdIYkVKZVk/view>

[https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/Translation%20and%20Historicity%20of%20the%20Book%20of%20Abraham\\_Revised.pdf](https://oi.uchicago.edu/sites/oi.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/shared/Translation%20and%20Historicity%20of%20the%20Book%20of%20Abraham_Revised.pdf)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Abraham](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Abraham)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t\\_iuV2vIXII](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_iuV2vIXII)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Abraham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Abraham)

<http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/volume-11-number-1-2010/egyptian-papyri-and-book-abraham-some-questions-and-answers>

<http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/no-weapon-shall-prosper/egyptian-papyri-and-book-abraham-faithful-egyptological-point-view>

<http://rsc.byu.edu/archived/no-weapon-shall-prosper/thoughts-book-abraham>

<http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/review/16/2/S00018-5176ad3a17bd418Morris.pdf>

[http://bookofabraham.com/ritner\\_article.pdf](http://bookofabraham.com/ritner_article.pdf)

<https://user.xmission.com/~research/mormonpdf/abrrevisited.pdf>

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V22N04\\_19.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V22N04_19.pdf)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V28N01\\_155.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V28N01_155.pdf)

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2015/01/brian-hauglid-the-book-of-abraham/>



## **Chapter 6 : Prophetic Mantle**

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox view holds that the Prophet of the Church speaks to Jesus Christ and more than that, that Christ directly speaks back. That the Prophets and Apostles of the Church are special witnesses of Christ because they have seen him and he has spoken to them just as God spoke to Moses face to face. They are Prophets in the same way that Moses, Noah, and Abraham are Prophets. One such quote that intimates as much is Harold B Lee when he stated:

*I know that this is the Lord's work. I know that Jesus Christ lives, and that he is closer to this Church and appears more often in holy places than any of us realize, excepting those to whom he makes personal appearance - Harold B Lee<sup>44</sup>*

Many members also hold that these men were chosen due to being more valiant or righteous than others of God's children.

### Critical View :

The Critical view holds that these men have not seen or spoken directly to Christ. That these prophets don't prophesy, these seers don't see, and these revelators don't share any revelation.<sup>45</sup> That these men have committed serious mistakes that have caused serious

---

<sup>44</sup> Harold B. Lee, "Everlasting Covenant," MIA conference address, 29 June 1969, 9–10

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/prophetsweb.htm>

harm<sup>46</sup> and do so knowing the general membership holds a certain assumption of what their mantle is without making any effort to correct those assumptions.<sup>47</sup> That in essence, they enjoy the deference and obedience given to them by members who hold the view that they interact directly with the personage of Jesus Christ while never adding clarity to such not occurring. They point to rare occasions when a leader seems to suggest as much as evidence that they have not seen Christ, such as when Elder Oaks in a local conference read D&C 107:23.

*“The twelve traveling councilors are called to be the Twelve Apostles, or special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world”*

and then says:

*“This is not to witness of a personal manifestation. To witness of the name is to witness of the plan, the work, or mission such as the atonement and the authority or priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, which an apostle who holds the keys is uniquely responsible to do. Of course apostles are also witnesses of Christ just like all members of the church who have the gift of the Holy Ghost.” - Elder Oaks<sup>48</sup>*

### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view seeks to show that whether they have spoken to Jesus or not is ambiguous. That many leaders have hinted at or worded their statements in way to leave room for them to have spoken to and seen the risen Christ. An example of such is this testimony by James E Faust who was an apostle and served in the first presidency.

*Mine is the certain knowledge that Jesus is our divine Savior, Redeemer, and the son of God the Father. I know of his reality by a sure perception so sacred I cannot give utterance to it. I know and testify with an absolute awareness that Joseph Smith restored the keys of the fulness of times and that every President of the Church has held those keys, as does President Gordon B. Hinckley today. - Elder Faust<sup>49</sup>*

They also make the argument that seeing Christ is not mandatory to be a prophet, seer, or revelator nor required to be a special witness of the Savior.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>46</sup> <http://religionnews.com/2016/03/12/study-shows-link-teen-suicide-mormon-populations/>

<sup>47</sup> <http://www.sltrib.com/lifestyle/faith/2122123-155/no-apology-really-mormons-question-apostle>

<sup>48</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1\\_I1xQdDguBOGktRjFhajVLU2M/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B1_I1xQdDguBOGktRjFhajVLU2M/view)

<sup>49</sup> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1995/05/heirs-to-the-kingdom-of-god.p21?lang=eng&clang=nep>

<sup>50</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/ask-the-apologist-must-all-apostles-literally-see-christ>

## Progressive View :

A Progressive perspective would validate that the top 15 leaders, and perhaps the prophet himself, have not seen or spoken face to face with Jesus. They would validate that it appears that much of the time these men operate by the same spiritual promptings and spirit we all operate by and recognize that such is, rather than being infallible, is prone to error and misunderstanding. That they are doing the best they can while trying to discern God's will in ways that are open to mistakes, misunderstanding, and overreaching. They take to heart D&C 1: 24 - 28.

*Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding. And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known; And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed; And inasmuch as they sinned they might be chastened, that they might repent; And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.*

That in essence, God works with these men in their weakness, their own understanding, and their own language. This means they will struggle to understand the word of God, to interpret it, and to deliver it to us in a way that God comes through. It also notifies us they will sin and they will err and those sins and errors may be small at times, and at other times, they may be great and hurt, harm, and cause trauma. But we must remember the last point these scriptures make, which is when at times these men operate from a place of humility, they might from time to time receive some greater light and understanding. This perspective seems to hold up a much more human experience that is prone to mistakes and even harm being done at times. That every once in awhile, further light and knowledge comes through the messiness of life.

## Resources For Personal Research

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_doctrine/Prophets\\_are\\_not\\_infallible](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_doctrine/Prophets_are_not_infallible)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/infallibility.htm>

<http://religiondispatches.org/the-mormon-version-of-infallibility/>

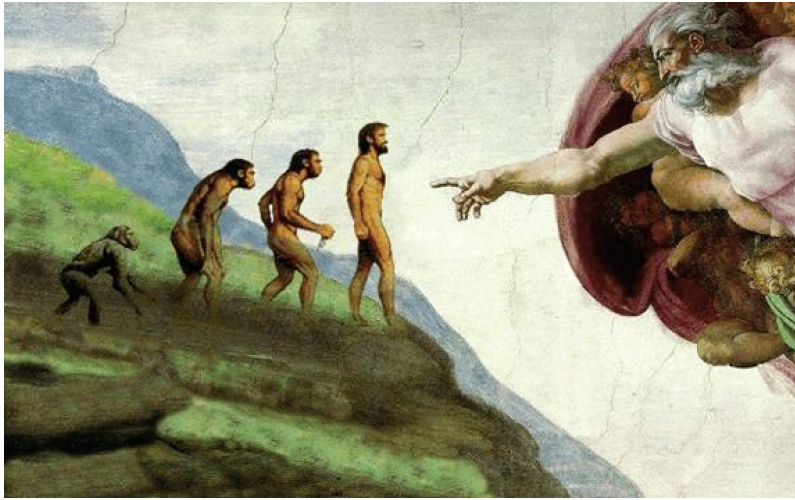
<http://www.mormonmatters.org/2010/06/25/the-fallibility-of-infallibility/>

<http://www.jefflindsay.com/fallible.shtml>

<https://www.sixteensmallstones.org/watchmen-on-the-tower-on-the-limits-of-prophetic-fallibility/>

<http://www.churchistrue.com/blog/patrick-mason-on-proper-view-of-prophets/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/03/post-a-nuanced-view-of-prophets/>



## **Chapter 7 : Science**

### **Orthodox View :**

While it seems to be slowly disappearing into the rear view mirror of history, there are still many Latter-day Saints who believe in a Earth that is only around 6,000 years old and who still hold deeply the idea that Humans having evolved from other hominids is false and is contrary to the Gospel and Church Doctrine. It should also be said that the Orthodox view holds that Flood spoken in connection to Noah was a Global Flood and that all the world's languages diversified from one language at the Tower of Babel. Generally, members of the Church hold the stories of the Old Testament, New Testament, and Book Of Mormon to be literal regardless of how implausible any individual story might stand in juxtaposition with science and logic as God is a God of miracles.

### **Critical View :**

The critic of such views holds that the archeological, geological, social sciences, and almost any other area of science speaks strongly against such beliefs. That a Global Flood covering the entire earth or all languages splitting from one language 4,500 years ago is not just implausible, but to the point of being absurd.<sup>51</sup> That science and the nature of what has been our human experience throughout recorded history imposes that much of what scripture deems as a supernatural experience (parting seas, global flood, Jesus ascending into the firmament, 6,000 year old earth, Enoch's city being taken into heaven, and many other so called miracles are

---

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-noahs-ark.html>

either highly embellished exaggerated stories or simply myths in the same way as the stories of Zeus or Paul Bunyan or Beowulf.

#### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view might agree that a Global flood is unlikely and might suggest a more local catastrophic flood as the solution. That Noah when stating the Earth was covered likely only meant to him as far as the eye could see. The apologist might deal with the tower of babel by agreeing it is likely a place where only the local languages diversified and not all the languages of the planet. Some Apologists also suggests that later Book of Mormon authors who had access to the biblical myths on the plates of Brass would have inserted those myths back into the Brother of Jared's story not being aware that such a connection and narrative was almost certainly not part of their experience. Some Apologists would argue where the science says the story is absurd that allow the authors of the story to mean something else than what we are assuming is being said. Others would argue that God has made the evidence appear contradictory so as to make it a matter of faith. And still others would make allowances for the contradictions to be explained away, but allowing some embellishment where a contradiction appears, but otherwise to still be a historical figure having a historical experience rooted in reality.

#### Progressive View :

Many Progressive Mormons see Noah's flood, Tower of Babel, 2000 stripling warrior youth all surviving a battle against a larger more experienced army, parted seas, and the numerous other miracles that seem larger than life as fables. These myths were told over Centuries by oral tradition in order to give a community an identity and to help them see their place in the world.<sup>52</sup> These stories are no more real than those found in the Bhagavad Gita or the stories of John Henry or Paul Bunyan. The Progressive in not taking these literally, need not be disappointed in God or His Church when such miracles seem to have ceased. Rather as another scripture speaks to, the Progressive Latter-day Saint looks to God to accomplish His work through "small and simple" things and yet also still finds value in sacred myth.

---

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/060378P-front.pdf>



## Resources For Personal Research

<http://www.mormonthink.com/scienceweb.htm>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_science/Global\\_or\\_local\\_Flood](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Global_or_local_Flood)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_science/Age\\_of\\_the\\_Earth](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Age_of_the_Earth)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_science/Did\\_Adam\\_and\\_Eve\\_really\\_exist](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Did_Adam_and_Eve_really_exist)

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_science/Dinosaurs](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_science/Dinosaurs)

<http://www.jefflindsay.com/LDSFAQ/science.shtml>

<http://www.sciencemeetsreligion.org/lds/bradshaw-evolution.php>

<https://wheatandtares.org/2015/05/31/figurative-literalness/>

<http://www.talkorigins.org/faqs/faq-noahs-ark.html>



*"If a man is worth a \$1000, the interest on that would be \$60, and one/10. of the interest will be of course \$6.— thus you see the plan." - Bishop Partridge<sup>54</sup>*

A Progressive Latter-day Saint will want to honor that every member is to make their own decision of what is an honest and full tithe and allow everyone their agency to decide such and will want others to know their options and not feel judged for their decision. That it truly is between them and the Lord. They would not want to impose a "proper" tithing in terms of gross, net, surplus, or some other way of formulating a full tithe. They would want to honor elder Dallin Oaks when he said:

*"Teachers who are commanded to teach "the principles of [the] gospel" and "the doctrine of the kingdom" (D&C 88:77) should generally forgo teaching specific rules or applications. For example, they would not teach any rules for determining what is a full tithing.... Once a teacher has taught the doctrine and the associated principles from the scriptures and the living prophets, such specific applications or rules are generally the responsibility of individuals and families." - Elder Oaks<sup>55</sup>*

### Resources For Personal Research

<http://www.i4m.com/think/intro/mormon-tithing.htm>

<http://puremormonism.blogspot.com/2012/12/are-we-paying-too-much-tithing.html>

<http://kutv.com/news/local/new-historical-information-reveals-original-meaning-of-lds-tithing>

<https://wheatandtares.org/2015/12/27/tithing-have-you-considered-paying-on-surplus/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/03/premium-tithing-part-1-surplus/>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_church\\_finances/Tithing/How\\_is\\_tithing\\_calculated](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_church_finances/Tithing/How_is_tithing_calculated)

---

<sup>54</sup> <https://history.lds.org/article/the-tithing-of-my-people?lang=eng>

<sup>55</sup> <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1999/10/gospel-teaching?lang=eng>



## **Chapter 9 : Word of Wisdom**

### **Orthodox View :**

The Orthodox view not only understands section 89 of the Doctrine & Covenants to be scripture and the official Word of God, but also any adaptation by the Church leadership between then and now to also be God's word to the Saints. That as LDS Leaders have amended the Dietary restrictions of the Word of Wisdom, the Orthodox Latter Day Saint sees every amending change and shift as further light and knowledge from God to His children. The Orthodox Latter-day Saints finds it crucial to be up to date on where the Church stands on soda pop, different types of tea, and whether sankas or postums are in the same category as coffee. The Orthodox member recognizes that obedience to the Word of Wisdom and all its amendments is one way that one shows God and the Church they are loyal, faithful, and obedient. That such adherence is part of the works that one must contribute towards exaltation.

### **Progressive View :**

The Progressive Latter-day Saint recognizes that Section 89 is the binding text on the Saints. They also recognize that much of the amending that came after was heavily influenced by the temperance movement and prohibition.<sup>56</sup> Not that the Progressive is setting aside said addendums and later interpretations, but rather the Progressive takes a step back and is not as heavily focused on being commanded in all things. The Progressive view understands well that Joseph Smith drank alcohol and that Brigham Young and other early leaders adhered to the

---

<sup>56</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V14N03\\_80.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_80.pdf)

Word of Wisdom very differently. That section 89 was given as a revelation to be understood as a “word of Wisdom”.

*To be sent greeting; not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation and the word of wisdom, showing forth the order and will of God in the temporal salvation of all saints in the last days - Section 89 of the D&C*

The Progressive Saint takes the Word of Wisdom seriously, in that, they sense that God is truly concerned for how we take care of our bodies and that we make informed decisions about what is healthy and what is not and avoid that which does our bodies harm. Progressive Latter-day Saints are aware that saints across the globe navigate the keeping of the “Word of Wisdom” differently. That in some Asian countries, some forms of the tea plant are seen as permitted by the Word of Wisdom and have the approval of leaders, while within the United States, any form of the Tea plant is seen as a violation culturally. In some countries, they have unique foods or drinks that are seen as a violation while other countries have no mention of them. In the end, the Progressive Saint recognizes that Agency is an important part of our mortal life and that God in honoring such agency has stated:

*For behold, it is not meet that I should command in all things; for he that is compelled in all things, the same is a slothful and not a wise servant; wherefore he receiveth no reward.- D&C Section 58:26*

So while the Orthodox Saint sees a very rigid box of things that are allowed and things that are not, the Progressive sees much more room for agency to make personal informed decisions regarding what is healthy and what is not and to act accordingly.

### Resources For Personal Research

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V14N03\\_80.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_80.pdf)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V14N03\\_48.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_48.pdf)

<https://lrwhitney.wordpress.com/2012/09/17/troubling-doctrines-part-2-a-word-of-wisdom/>

<http://mit.irr.org/word-of-wisdom-it-divine-revelation>

<http://www.i4m.com/think/history/Historical%20Analysis%20of%20the%20Word%20of%20Wisdom.pdf>

<https://history.lds.org/article/doctrine-and-covenants-word-of-wisdom?lang=eng>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Word\\_of\\_Wisdom/History\\_and\\_implementation](http://en.fairmormon.org/Word_of_Wisdom/History_and_implementation)

<http://www.mormonmatters.org/2008/12/26/temperance-movement-and-the-word-of-wisdom/>

<http://www.mormonthink.com/wow.htm>



## **Chapter 10 : True and Living Church**

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox view holds that the LDS Church is the “only True and Living Church with which the Lord is well pleased”.<sup>57</sup> That Mormonism is the only Church with Priesthood Power, Priesthood Keys, Saving Ordinances, and that all other Churches are defunct... or in the words of Joseph Smith

*“I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong; and the Personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in his sight; that those professors were all corrupt; that: “they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” - Joseph Smith<sup>58</sup>*

### Critical View :

The Critical view holds that The LDS Church is a fraud. That there are so many contradictions within LDS History and theology, that it’s simply not what it claims to be. That it may have some good traits and behaviors and some positive effects in the World, but it also has a lot of unhealthiness and causes harm and trauma to many.<sup>59</sup> That since it is not the one and only “True” Church and since it does cause harm, it is reasonable to walk away from the Church and it is also reasonable to be a voice of warning to others about it.

---

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/dc/1.30>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/pgp/js-h/1?lang=eng>

<sup>59</sup> <https://www.culteducation.com/warningsigns.html>

## Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view acknowledges that Mormonism has its complexities and paradoxes, but that for God's plan to leave room for agency, that we should expect evidence on both sides and the truthfulness not to be clear cut. That the truth of Mormonism is not known by delving into its paradoxes or its complexities, but through the still small voice of the Holy Ghost which comes from exercising faith and through sincere prayer.<sup>60</sup>

## Progressive View :

The Progressive view takes this from a different angle. The Progressive view honors that Mormonism has unique truth to contribute to the World. At the same time, it honors that other Churches also have truths, even perhaps unique truths.<sup>61</sup> That Mormonism doesn't have nor does it claim to have all truth or even all Priesthood keys for that matter.<sup>62</sup> That the LDS Church is one instrument in the Orchestra<sup>63</sup> and that other people outside Mormonism and even other Churches have a role to play in the all encompassing plan of our Heavenly Father to bring His Children home.<sup>64</sup> The Progressive would argue that such is part of our doctrine and point to such statements like following from former apostle Orson F Whitney.

*Perhaps the Lord needs such men on the outside of his Church, to help it along. They are among its auxiliaries, and can do more good for the cause where the Lord has placed them, than anywhere else. And the same is true of the priesthood and its auxiliaries inside the Church. Hence, some are drawn into the fold and receive a testimony of the Truth; while others remain unconverted—for the present; the beauties and glories of the gospel being veiled temporarily from their view, for a wise purpose. The Lord will open their eyes in his own due time. - Apostle Orson F Whitney<sup>65</sup>*

*God is using more than one people for the accomplishment of his great and marvelous work. The Latter-day Saints cannot do it all. It is too vast, too arduous, for any one people. - Apostle Orson F Whitney<sup>66</sup>*

*Again I say, the Lord's Work has need of auxiliaries outside, as well as inside, to help it along. Because of their worldly influence—which would depart if they connected themselves with the Church—many are kept where they are, where the Lord has placed them, and can best use them for the good of all. - Apostle Orson F Whitney<sup>67</sup>*

---

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/bofm/moro/10.5?lang=eng>

<sup>61</sup> [http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First\\_Presidency\\_Gods\\_Love\\_1978.pdf](http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First_Presidency_Gods_Love_1978.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/1977/04/our-great-potential?lang=eng>

<sup>63</sup> <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2008/04/concern-for-the-one?lang=eng>

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First\\_Presidency\\_Gods\\_Love\\_1978.pdf](http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First_Presidency_Gods_Love_1978.pdf)

<sup>65</sup> Conference Report, April 1928, p.59-60

<sup>66</sup> Conference Report, April 1928, p.59-60

<sup>67</sup> Conference Report, April 1928, p.59-60

As well as the following statement by President Kimball and the First Presidency in 1978.

*The First Presidency (Spencer W. Kimball, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney) Based upon ancient and modern revelation, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints gladly teaches and declares the Christian doctrine that all men and women are brothers and sisters, not only by blood relationship from common mortal progenitors but as literal spirit children of an Eternal Father. The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given to them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals. The Hebrew prophets prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, who should provide salvation for all mankind who believe in the gospel. Consistent with these truths, we believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation, either in this life or in the life to come. We also declare that the gospel of Jesus Christ, restored to His Church in our day, provides the only way to a mortal life of happiness and a fulness of joy forever. For those who have not received this gospel, the opportunity will come to them in the life hereafter if not in this life. Our message therefore is one of special love and concern for the eternal welfare of all men and women, regardless of religious belief, race, or nationality, knowing that we are truly brothers and sisters because we are sons and daughters of the same Eternal Father. - "God's Love for All Mankind," First Presidency Statement, Feb. 15, 1978<sup>68</sup>*

The Progressive viewpoint would acknowledge that Jesus seems to use the word Church in different ways. That sometimes he uses it to describe the earthly institution created to administer the saving ordinances (of which less than one fifth of one percent of God's children presently alive claim membership within). At other times, Christ seems to be defining the word church in a more inclusive way. Such that anyone on the earth who is becoming something more or is reaching higher is included under the umbrella of the word. One example is D&C section 10 received in 1829 prior to any church in this dispensation even existing when the Savior says

*Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. - D&C 10.*

The Progressive view would honor that the LDS Church is the guardian and administrator of Saving Ordinances, but that it also may have overreached some on just how unique it is and how it is "True" while every other Church isn't. It may also have overreached to some extent on its emphasis of God's servants within the Church leaving its membership not open to servants of God outside Mormonism who are called and authorized and helping Heavenly Father to carry out His plan.

---

<sup>68</sup> [http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First\\_Presidency\\_Gods\\_Love\\_1978.pdf](http://www.dovesandserpents.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/First_Presidency_Gods_Love_1978.pdf)



## Resources For Personal Research

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/selected-articles/joseph-smith-and-only-true-and-living-church>

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/benjaminthescibe/2017/01/quick-thoughts-dc-130-true-living-church/>

<https://bycommonconsent.com/2017/02/24/lesson-9-the-only-true-living-church-dc2017/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2013/06/true-and-living-church/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/01/2197/>

<http://www.mormonmatters.org/2012/09/30/128-the-one-true-church/>



## **Chapter 11 : Joseph Smith's Practice of Polygamy**

### Orthodox Position :

The Orthodox member is aware only vaguely that their founding prophet practiced polygamy. They likely can not name any of his plural wives nor any of the circumstances under which the said marriages took place or what they entailed. They believe that Joseph<sup>69</sup> and his first wife Emma<sup>70</sup> had a strong loving marriage<sup>71</sup> unaware of any burden on their marriage, incurred by Joseph's involvement with polygamy. Orthodox believers often place little emphasis on learning any details beyond that.

### Critical View :

The Critic points out that there is so much more to the story surrounding Joseph's involvement in polygamy. Critics note that Joseph had approximately 32 other wives besides Emma.<sup>72</sup> That Joseph was sealed to many of these women without Emma's approval and often without her

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2008/09/my-dear-and-beloved-companion-the-letters-of-joseph-and-emma-smith?lang=eng>

<sup>70</sup> <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/joseph-smith-prophet-man/9-religious-dimension-emma-letters-joseph>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1979/09/the-elect-lady-emma-hale-smith?lang=eng>

<sup>72</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Joseph\\_Smith%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Joseph_Smith%27s_wives)

awareness.<sup>73</sup> He was sealed to several young women, some as young as 14 and many of his young wives were working as maids in the Smith home or living in the Smith home when Joseph approached them.<sup>74</sup> Joseph's first known relationship with a woman other than Emma was Fanny Alger, a 16-year-old who was working in the Smith home as a maid.<sup>75</sup> Joseph entered this relationship in 1833, over two years before sealing keys were restored<sup>76</sup>, and both Emma his wife<sup>77</sup> and Oliver Cowdery considered this relationship an affair.<sup>78</sup> Critics point out that Joseph was sealed to mothers and daughters at the same time.<sup>79</sup> Even to sisters of the same family.<sup>80</sup> At times, the other member of the family married to Joseph did not know of their family member's relationship with Joseph.<sup>81</sup> Joseph entered into polyandrous relationships, in other words being sealed to women who were already married to other men.<sup>82</sup> Critics point out that Emma while being his first wife, was the 23rd women sealed to him.<sup>83</sup> And lastly, that at least some of these relationships were sexual. Even in the case of the younger girls, circumstantial evidence suggests a sexual dynamic as a possibility<sup>84</sup> The critic also points out that Joseph broke the very rules laid out in section 132 of the D&C that additional wives could only be taken with the approval of the first wife and they they must be virgins (Emma was not giving her approval nor were many of the wives virgins as they were already married).<sup>85</sup> The Critic would raise concerns of coercion and unethical pressure on these girls and women to enter these relationships.<sup>86</sup> They would also raise concerns that some of the details point to Joseph approaching these women while their husbands were away from home, and at least, in one case away on a mission for the Church.<sup>87</sup>

### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view acknowledges the number of wives, the ages of the women, and lack of awareness and approval by Emma and almost all the other data the critic puts forth as facts. Where the Apologist differs is on the conclusions. The Apologetic perspective for instance would suggests that sexual intimacy was part of some of the marriages, but that we have no

<sup>73</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>74</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.wivesofjosephsmith.org/PDFBooklet/PDFBooklet.pdf>

<sup>76</sup> <http://mit.irr.org/joseph-smith-and-fanny-alger>

<sup>77</sup> William McLellan, Letter to Joseph Smith III, July 1872, Community of Christ Archives

<sup>78</sup> Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, January 21, 1838. Original in Huntington Library

<sup>79</sup> <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/patty-bartlett/>

<sup>80</sup> <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/plural-wives-overview/eliza-partridge/>

<sup>81</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_polygamy/Marriages\\_involving\\_mothers\\_daughters\\_and\\_sisters](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_polygamy/Marriages_involving_mothers_daughters_and_sisters)

<sup>82</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>83</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Joseph\\_Smith%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Joseph_Smith%27s_wives)

<sup>84</sup> <http://cesletter.com/debunking-fairmormon/docs/evidence-for-the-sexual-side-of-joseph-smith-polygamy.pdf>

<sup>85</sup> <http://www.mormonstories.org/dc-132-a-revelation-of-men-not-god/>

<sup>86</sup> <http://cesletter.com/debunking-fairmormon/polygamy-polyandry.html#threats>

<sup>87</sup> <http://cesletter.com/debunking-fairmormon/polygamy-polyandry.html#hyde>

solid evidence for sexuality<sup>88</sup> with the women who are not of adult age<sup>89</sup> and also within the polyandrous marriages (women already married to other men). The Apologetic view suggests that young brides were more normalized in that day and would not have been seen as immoral. That specifically, there is little to no evidence of any sexuality with the young women other than Fanny Alger) nor with the polyandrous marriages.<sup>90</sup> It should be said that in regard to Fanny Alger, the Apologetic view counters that there is evidence and testimony of a marriage ceremony of some sort occurring. Hence making in God's eyes the marriage valid.<sup>91 92</sup> This perspective requires that section 132 of the Doctrine & Covenants be understood in a different way. For example, the Apologist would suggest D&C 132 does not limit additional wives to being virgins in spite of a surface reading seeming to indicate so.<sup>93</sup> This view would also suggest that Joseph did not break the rules established in section 132 or it would argue that the rules did not apply to Joseph.

#### Progressive Viewpoint :

The Progressive perspective would validate that Polygamy caused a lot of hurt.<sup>94</sup> That it may have been practiced by Joseph Smith in ways that God did not approve. That the possibility even exists that polygamy as a whole was not condoned by God and was a mistake. Most Progressives are deeply uncomfortable with the young ages of some of the wives and the secretive nature of the practice. A mother and daughter or sisters being sealed without knowledge of each other is disturbing to some. Almost every Progressive member feels sadness and empathy towards Emma and how much of an emotional toll the history indicates she endured due to polygamy. That her marriage to Joseph was rocky at times and that she at times was strongly in dissent of polygamy and the way Joseph was practicing it. Many Progressives hope for a day when section 132 can be set aside as not binding on the saints. Where they can openly hold the personal perspective that it was not of God and can focus more on the parts of Canon and the Gospel that ultimately bring them peace and a strong connection to God.

---

<sup>88</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith/Polygamy/Lustful\\_motives](http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Lustful_motives)

<sup>89</sup> <http://toddmcompton.com/revhmk5.html>

<sup>90</sup> <http://josephsmithspolygamy.org/common-questions/plural-marriages-sexual/>

<sup>91</sup> Levi Ward Hancock, "Autobiography with Additions in 1896 by Mosiah Hancock," 63, MS 570

<sup>92</sup> Eliza Jane Churchill Webb, letter to Mary Bond, April 24, 1876

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Lending-Clarity-to-Confusion.pdf> (pg 20)

<sup>94</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N03\\_86.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N03_86.pdf)

## Resources For Personal Research

<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng&old=true>

<http://www.mormonthink.com/joseph-smith-polygamy.htm>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith/Polygamy/Polyandry](http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Polyandry)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N03\\_69.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N03_69.pdf)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Joseph\\_Smith%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Joseph_Smith%27s_wives)

<http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Accusations-of-polyandry.pdf>

<https://www.mormoninterpreter.com/an-easier-way-to-understanding-joseph-smiths-polygamy/>



## **Chapter 12 : Polygamy after Joseph Smith**

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox perspective acknowledges that Brigham Young was a polygamist. This view has an inkling that a few leaders afterward also were polygamists. This segment has been taught and has perpetuated the idea that this polygamy occurred because the women far outnumbered the men or that as husbands died on the trek west or because of mob violence, that widows were absorbed as polygamous wives to be provided for.

### Critical View :

The Critical view takes into account the historical reality of how polygamy was practiced by Brigham Young down to Wilford Woodruff and even beyond.<sup>95</sup> Brigham Young when 45 married 16 year old Lucy Bigelow.<sup>96</sup> When John Taylor was 78, he entered a polygamous marriage with Josephine Roueche who was 26.<sup>97</sup> When Wilford Woodruff was 45, he entered a polygamous marriage with Emma Smoot who was 15.<sup>98</sup> And Lorenzo Snow when 57, married Sarah Ephramina who was 15.<sup>99</sup> They would note that Brigham Young had 5 wives, who when he married them, were under the age of 18. Brigham, like Joseph Smith, also entered polyandrous relationships (where the women were already married to a living husband). He

<sup>95</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V20N03\\_59.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V20N03_59.pdf)

<sup>96</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Brigham\\_Young%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Brigham_Young%27s_wives)

<sup>97</sup> <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/champion-liberty-john-taylor/john-taylor-family-man>

<sup>98</sup> <http://toddmcompton.com/WWfamilies.htm>

<sup>99</sup> <https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/within-these-prison-walls/introduction>

appears to have had several polyandrous wives<sup>100</sup>. The critic takes this information and makes the conclusion that early Church leaders were practicing a sexual patriarchal abuse<sup>101</sup>, including using their power and authority to secure relationships with young women. That for these leaders, the marriages were a behavior that contained motives that were anything but righteous and moral or commands of God.<sup>102</sup>

### Apologist View :

The Apologists view would make a space for how much more normalized such age differences were, and that when we step back into time, such differences in age would be seen as much more normal and acceptable within the society contrasted against our present day.<sup>103</sup> Apologists would also make space for us to understand that while there are many young wives, there are also many of an older age as well. Lastly, they would point to any claim of sex, as a motive is simply making assumption that is without any evidence.<sup>104</sup>

### Progressive View :

The Progressive viewpoint recognizes that in some ways the Polygamy after Joseph Smith was very different from how Joseph practiced polygamy. That there was a general trend that the older these early prophets got, the greater the differences in age between them and their young bride. That many of the comments these early leaders made are by the standard of our day very sexist and abusive. It would validate that polygamy was hard on many of these women, and that while some of the women's voices would speak positively regarding polygamy and the blessing that came from it, that there was also a lot of hurt, pain, trauma, abuse, and emotional turmoil in the written statements of others. The Progressive voice would validate that there is some data indicating that underage brides may have occurred slightly more often in the 1800's. Though it would also make note that there is a moral and cultural difference between a standard marriage where two people fall in love and choose each other rather than a marriage that is encouraged by religious authority and religious expectations and perhaps even religious pressure. As stated in the previous Chapter on Joseph Smith's polygamy, Progressive Latter-day Saints are extremely open to a theological shift where Section

---

<sup>100</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Brigham\\_Young%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Brigham_Young%27s_wives)

<sup>101</sup> <http://cesletter.com/debunking-fairmormon/pedophilia.html>

<sup>102</sup> <https://www.gregtrimble.com/what-every-mormon-really-needs-to-know-about-polygamy/>

<sup>103</sup> [http://pt.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith/Polygamy/Marriages\\_to\\_young\\_women](http://pt.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Marriages_to_young_women)

<sup>104</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph\\_Smith/Polygamy/Lustful\\_motives](http://en.fairmormon.org/Joseph_Smith/Polygamy/Lustful_motives)

132 and polygamy are set off to the side as an unknown rather than trumpeted as theological command from a loving Heavenly Father.

### Resources For Personal Research

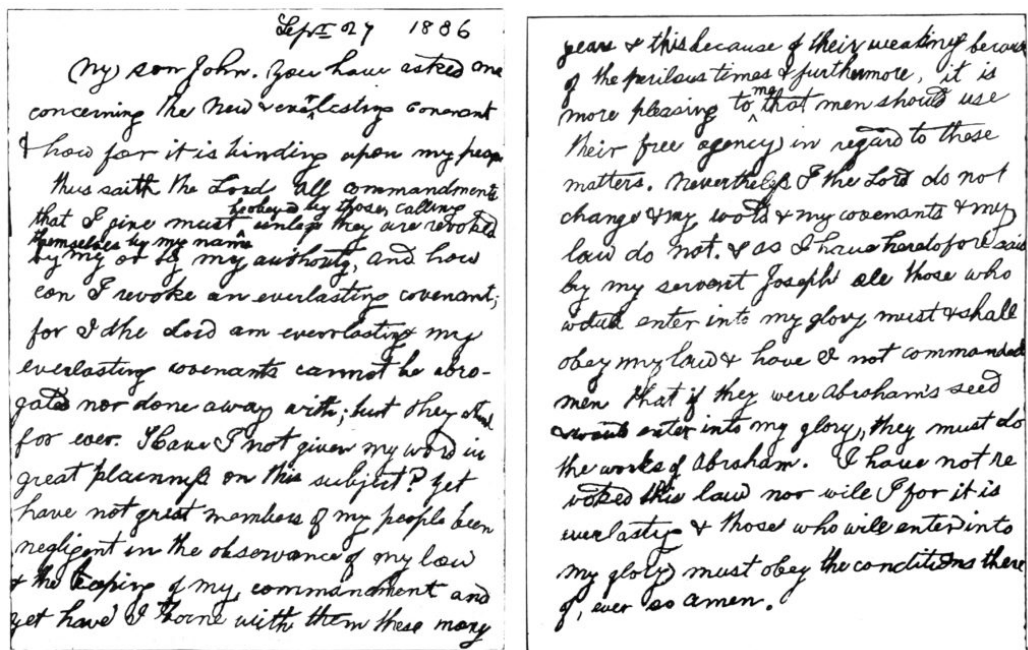
<https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-and-families-in-early-utah?lang=eng&old=true>

[http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/polygamy\\_mexico.pdf](http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/polygamy_mexico.pdf)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Brigham\\_Young%27s\\_wives](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Brigham_Young%27s_wives)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/polygamy.htm>





## Chapter 13 : The Cessation of Polygamy

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox view holds that Polygamy was practiced by the Church until 1890 when Wilford Woodruff received a revelation where God informed the Church that Polygamy can no longer be practiced without the consequence of the government coming down hard on the Church and thwarting the progress of God's kingdom and hence commanded an end to Polygamy. The Church has abstained from the practice in regards to living individuals ever since.

### Critical View :

The Critical perspective would point us to the history which suggests a much different and messier transition. First that the Church neglects a revelation in 1886 where John Taylor seemingly had a voice to voice conversation with Jesus Christ. Where in the revelation, the Savior confirms to President John Taylor that Plural Marriage is the New and Everlasting Covenant and it is to never be taken off the earth as it applies to living members of the Church.<sup>105</sup> And yet 4 years later, Wilford Woodruff is announcing a change that Contradicts the very voice of Christ in a 180 turn from the Savior's words.<sup>106</sup> That the 1886 revelation adds credibility to the fundamentalist break off groups that continued polygamy.<sup>107</sup> That even after

<sup>105</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886\\_Revelation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886_Revelation)

<sup>106</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/the-manifesto-and-the-end-of-plural-marriage?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.mormonfundamentalism.com/archive/NEWFILES/1886RevelationNew.htm>

the 1890 Manifesto, the Church continued to authorize and perform plural marriages secretly underground.<sup>108</sup> This public distancing of polygamy while privately continuing the practice, the critic would point out, was done to buy themselves some time in hopes that they could secure legislation and a kinder attitude publicly, that polygamy could be practiced publicly again without worry of government pressure and penalties. That Church leaders sent out groups of saints to other countries like Mexico and Canada to continue the practice in safer places in hopes to one day publicly reinstate plural marriage (many of these folks sent were the early members of the fundamentalist groups).<sup>109</sup> Imagine being told secretly to go somewhere and keep plural marriage as a principle going only to be abandoned a couple of decades later by the very Church that sent you). That even as late as 1911, former Apostle John W. Taylor (Son of 3rd Church president John Taylor, the same John Taylor who received the 1886 revelation) communicated to the Quorum of the Twelve that he had just had a conversation with Church President Joseph F. Smith where it was understood that he was still authorized secretly and under sacred responsibility to continue the practice.<sup>110</sup> That this comes even after the second manifesto of 1904. That in the end, President Woodruff's manifesto was anything but a revelation<sup>111</sup> and was more of a chess move to buy time until the legalities of plural marriage could be worked out.

#### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view holds that the slow and drawn out ending of polygamy was appropriate and approved by God. That there was much confusion by Church members and even some leaders on whether the Church could or should distance itself from polygamy and that a drawn out method where the generation that practiced it could essentially not have to confront the issue and could "die off" and a younger generation that was not as strongly tied to it could make the final shift to ending the practice.<sup>112</sup> The Apologetic view would hold that John Taylor's 1886 revelation was never accepted by common consent, and hence, was not binding on the Church or they would suggest we are completely misunderstanding what Jesus was telling President Taylor.<sup>113</sup> And that either way, this revelation is of little importance to the Church today.

<sup>108</sup> [http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/plural\\_marriages\\_after\\_the\\_1890\\_manifesto-d\\_michael\\_quinn.pdf](http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/plural_marriages_after_the_1890_manifesto-d_michael_quinn.pdf)

<sup>109</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N03\\_110.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N03_110.pdf)

<sup>110</sup> <http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MF0193.pdf>

<sup>111</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V05N03\\_13.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V05N03_13.pdf)

<sup>112</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_polygamy/Practiced\\_after\\_the\\_Manifesto](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_polygamy/Practiced_after_the_Manifesto)

<sup>113</sup>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Criticism\\_of\\_Mormonism/Books/One\\_Nation\\_Under\\_Gods/Use\\_of\\_sources/John\\_Taylor\\_September\\_1886\\_revelation](http://en.fairmormon.org/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Books/One_Nation_Under_Gods/Use_of_sources/John_Taylor_September_1886_revelation)

## Progressive View :

The Progressive perspective validates that the Church had hopes to continue polygamy after 1890 and used the manifesto as a way to buy time. That John Taylor truly had a legitimate document on his desk that purported to be a revelation between him and Christ, where Christ is adamant that polygamy is to not be done away regardless of the pressure of the world. That such a revelation adds some credibility to fundamentalist break off groups (while also still acknowledging very deep issues with their claims as well). This perspective would validate that while it doesn't see the fundamentalist groups having legitimacy, it would validate that they were given an impossible task wherein they were asked to be the guardians of Plural Marriage as a principle. Then once those leaders who asked such a sacrifice of them had died off and others who wanted to abandon polygamy once and for all came into leadership, that these saints making such a sacrifice were shed off as collateral damage. And having been appointed as sacred guardians of the principle, they had little choice but to create a theological framing where they could continue polygamy outside the institutional church and see doing so as having God's approval. Again, the Progressive view would want us to take a step back and consider the toll polygamy has had on hearts and minds of its members throughout its history.

## Resources For Personal Research

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V31N02\\_19.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V31N02_19.pdf)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N01\\_11.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N01_11.pdf)

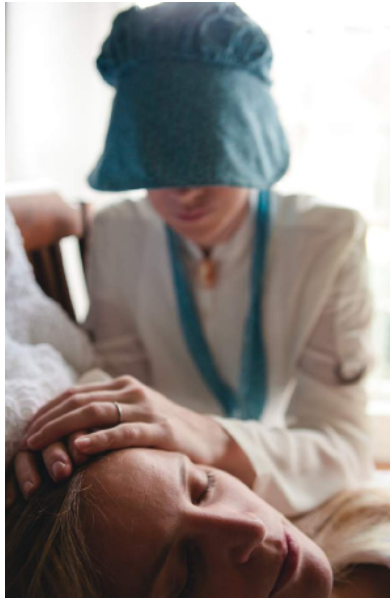
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886\\_Revelation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1886_Revelation)

<http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MF0193.pdf>

<http://mormonpolygamydocuments.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/MF0128.pdf>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Criticism\\_of\\_Mormonism/Books/One\\_Nation\\_Under\\_Gods/Use\\_of\\_sources/John\\_Taylor\\_September\\_1886\\_revelation](http://en.fairmormon.org/Criticism_of_Mormonism/Books/One_Nation_Under_Gods/Use_of_sources/John_Taylor_September_1886_revelation)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V05N03\\_13.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V05N03_13.pdf)



## **Chapter 14 : Role of Women throughout the Church History**

### **Orthodox View :**

The Orthodox perspective holds that Men and women are not only taught by the Church to be equals, but that such is actually the reality in how Church life is lived out.<sup>114</sup> That the Church has always treated women as having unique gifts and being invited to share those. That yes, Men hold Priesthood offices and Women do not, but that in God's Plan of Happiness, it is intentional that Men and Women play a different role in the Kingdom of God.<sup>115</sup> That playing different roles and having different purposes does not create inequality, but rather a more complete whole. The Orthodox member sees this division of gifts and responsibilities as having existed as part of God's plan since the beginning of time and having an eternal nature.<sup>116</sup> That when husbands and wives live the gospel, both partners feel loved, feel needed, and feel fulfillment from their gifts being utilized. That such is the core of an eternal relationship.

### **Critical View :**

The Critical view holds that women are secondary citizens in the Church.<sup>117</sup> That the Church is a heavily patriarchal system that minimizes a women's visibility and provides little space for her

---

<sup>114</sup> <https://www.lds.org/manual/eternal-marriage-student-manual/equality-of-men-and-women?lang=eng>

<sup>115</sup> <https://www.lds.org/youth/learn/yw/marriage-and-family/roles?lang=eng>

<sup>116</sup> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/2008/10/gender-is-an-essential-characteristic-of-eternal-identity-and-purpose?lang=eng>

<sup>117</sup> <https://mormondom.com/letter-to-a-mormon-man-8d251aa1f062>

to advocate for her perspective, to be heard, and to be a voice for healthy and positive change.<sup>118</sup> The incongruity of female to male ratio in leadership, on the stand for local and general meetings, and the diminished presence, and at times completely absent from leadership councils, leaves a diminished space to be heard, valued, and perceived as an important and equal voice. These are the serious flaws of a patriarchy.<sup>119</sup> From a young age, girls within Mormonism are subjected to the experience that boys get more recognition, more visibility, more responsibility, more value in what they say, and their contribution is seen as being more important to the work of the Church<sup>120</sup>. The Critical view would also impose the history of the Church in a way that is different from the Orthodox perspective. That Joseph Smith gave the Relief Society a Priesthood Key<sup>121</sup>, that he authorized them to give anointed blessings of healing<sup>122</sup> and they went forth and did so<sup>123</sup>, and that he taught the brethren to leave them be to do such things.<sup>124</sup> That Relief Society in the early Church had more autonomy, and as an organization able to have women stand at its head without being under the Priesthood umbrella as an auxiliary, and hence, the major decisions of the Society were made by women without deferring to male Church leaders.<sup>125</sup> The Critic would also point out that there is harm and trauma occurring in the Church and its culture in regards to the treatment of Women. Examples would include invisibility of women as spiritual leaders, lack of stewardship, no avenues for recourse in cases of abuse, young girls confessing sexual sins to adult males. Other difficult situations for women include counsel that she sacrifices her well-being to ensure her children's needs are met, even to the extreme, and that she has limited value outside her role as mother and a wife. The critic would point to theology that imposes that a woman's role in eternity is to create spirit children and stay in the background of the grand work her husband will be performing. This view would point to the deep unhealthiness that comes from a patriarchal culture<sup>126</sup> that is seen as having an unquestioning authority where obedience is seen as a virtue.<sup>127</sup> That such a society is ripe for abuse and trauma.<sup>128</sup>

### Apologetic View :

<sup>118</sup> <http://signaturebookslibrary.org/women-and-authority-08/>

<sup>119</sup> <http://ordainwomen.org/mormon-male-privilege/>

<sup>120</sup> [http://www.cumorah.com/index.php?target=view\\_other\\_articles&story\\_id=658&cat\\_id=35](http://www.cumorah.com/index.php?target=view_other_articles&story_id=658&cat_id=35)

<sup>121</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>122</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>123</sup> <https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/029-16-25.pdf>

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>125</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V37N03\\_75.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V37N03_75.pdf)

<sup>126</sup> <https://www.lds.org/ensign/1973/02/strengthening-the-patriarchal-order-in-the-home?lang=eng>

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.mormonstories.org/stories-of-women-who-feel-they-have-been-harmed-by-mormon-patriarchy/>

<sup>128</sup> <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/39004/GeorgeJulieA2013.pdf;sequence>

The Apologetic view would validate that mistakes can be made by male leaders, but that largely, much good occurs within the Church structure and culture. That when God's children adhere to gospel principles, these mistakes can be avoided. That women by and far in the Church report being happy and fulfilled and not desiring a different set of responsibilities.<sup>129</sup> This View would validate that women in early Church history did give blessings and Relief Society did operate differently, but that in God's Kingdom where His Church is led by revelation and a living God, we should expect changes to occur as God sees fit through his Church leaders in God's own time. That much of the harm in and out of the Church is due to human nature, and that the Church provides a better and much more wholesome environment where human natures can change and any kind of hurtful or harmful behavior can have a light shined on it and we as a people can become better.

### Progressive View:

The Progressive view validates that Joseph had a bigger vision for the relief society and for women than what has been realized in today's church. That Joseph's death prevented him from continuing to encourage the relief society to grow into a quorum equal with its male counterpart. The Progressive viewpoint is divided on priesthood ordination and offices: one side arguing that women should hold priesthood offices just as men do<sup>130</sup>, and the other side arguing for a complimentary set of callings and responsibilities for women priestesses.<sup>131</sup> Either way, this view holds that women need a recognized authority, more visibility, greater input in decision making, and a safe space for their light and inspiration to have an impact on the church. The Progressive perspective looks forward to a day when women will once again give anointed blessings and claim back their spiritual power (given by God through Joseph Smith). The Progressive validates that humans will always make mistakes that hurt others while acknowledging that patriarchy often magnifies this tendency. The Progressive also recognizes at the same time that the church also does things much better than the world. That while there is a space where unhealthy attitudes and behaviors can exist, also, there is a space where much good sprouts out from.

### Resources For Personal Research

<https://www.lds.org/topics/joseph-smiths-teachings-about-priesthood-temple-and-women?lang=eng&old=true>

<https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/pdf/029-16-25.pdf>

---

<sup>129</sup> [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/08/big-majority-of-mormons-oppose-women-in-priesthood-including-women/](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2013/10/08/big-majority-of-mormons-oppose-women-in-priesthood-including-women/)

<sup>130</sup> <http://ordainwomen.org/>

<sup>131</sup> <http://www.mormonstories.org/alternative-feminist-approaches-to-ordain-women/>

<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/women-and-authority-17/>

<http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/39004/GeorgeJulieA2013.pdf;sequence>

<https://carriemiles.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/carrie-miles-mssa-submission2.pdf>

<http://ordainwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/OrdainWomen6DiscussionsSeetheSymptoms.pdf>

<http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/39004/GeorgeJulieA2013.pdf;sequence>

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V37N03\\_75.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V37N03_75.pdf)



## **Chapter 15 : Temples and Freemasonry**

### **Orthodox Position :**

The Orthodox Position holds that the temple endowment ceremony in all its forms, comes from God. That the clothing, the rituals, the wording, the covenants, the symbols, the signs and tokens, and the thematic depiction were all revealed by God through revelation to the Prophet Joseph Smith. When Orthodox members learn of the connection between the Temple Endowment and Masonic rituals, many hold that Masonry goes back to Solomon's temple and that Masonry is a corrupted form of the original endowment.<sup>132</sup> They believe Joseph corrected this corrupted ceremony when he delivered the Temple Endowment.<sup>133</sup>

### **Critical View :**

The Critical view puts forth that much of what we call the endowment ceremony comes very directly through Masonry.<sup>134</sup> That Joseph Smith and early church leaders were Masons, and that much of the Endowment Ceremony strongly coincides with the wording, symbols, signs, tokens, clothing, and covenants of Masonic rituals.<sup>135</sup> The Critical view holds that Masonry is not an ancient set of rituals pointing to scholarship that suggests Masonry got its start in the late 1600's.<sup>136</sup> The Critical perspective holds that while Joseph claimed to be restoring a corrupt form of the endowment by utilizing Masonry, it appears that Masonic practice has little

<sup>132</sup> <https://questions4mormons.wordpress.com/2010/11/10/lds-temples/>

<sup>133</sup> <http://www.shields-research.org/General/Masonry.html>

<sup>134</sup> [http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/mormonism\\_and\\_masonry-s\\_h\\_goodwin.pdf](http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/mormonism_and_masonry-s_h_goodwin.pdf)

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/masonicsymbolsandtheldstemple.htm>

<sup>136</sup> <http://w.mormonismi.net/pdf/homer1994.pdf>



to nothing to do with anything attached to early Christianity or any historical ancient ceremony.

### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view acknowledges that the best evidence points to Masonry originating in the late 1600's, though this view would argue that many of the principles and symbols used in Masonry go back much further. For example, some Apologetic perspectives claim that craft workers or trades people in ancient times had to prove their credentials as they went from town to town by sharing secret signs and tokens to those who wished to hire them.<sup>137</sup> There is also an Apologetic response to separate the "Endowment" or the spiritual enlightenment being relayed by God through the ceremony with the "presentation of the endowment" or ceremony itself. That Joseph utilized the ceremony from Masonry to provide a thematic vehicle by which the endowment could be conveyed.<sup>138</sup> The Apologetic perspective argues that it matters little what mode Joseph used to convey the Endowment, what is much more important is that people experience God in the House of the Lord.

### Progressive View :

The Progressive view validates that Joseph utilized Masonic rituals as the foundational basis for the Endowment ceremony. The Progressive view acknowledges that some of the early leaders and members knew full well that Smith was utilizing Masonic rituals. The Progressive perspective acknowledges early leaders along with Joseph Smith believed that Masonic rituals were tied to ancient Christianity. That said, the Progressive view focuses little on whether the Endowment has ancient origins or not. Some Progressive views even set aside whether the ceremony comes from God, or allow the possibility that Joseph completely fabricated the ceremony. This perspective believes they can still treasure the Endowment Ceremony. That despite the lack of historicity or connection with King Solomon's Temple, the temple for some still facilitates an experience with the divine. That granted for some, the temple may be dull and boring, holding little spiritual value. That for some, it may even be toxic or harmful. Yet the Progressive view validates for others the Temple rituals facilitate spiritual experiences where they encounter the divine in a way that is unique to this sacred space.

---

<sup>137</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Question:\\_Did\\_Joseph\\_Smith\\_copy\\_Masonic\\_material\\_in\\_order\\_to\\_create\\_the\\_LDS\\_temple\\_rites%3F](http://en.fairmormon.org/Question:_Did_Joseph_Smith_copy_Masonic_material_in_order_to_create_the_LDS_temple_rites%3F)

<sup>138</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2005/the-message-and-the-messenger-latter-day-saints-and-freemasonry>

## Resources For Personal Research

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V34N0102\\_87.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V34N0102_87.pdf)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/temple.htm>

[http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry\\_and\\_the\\_Temple](http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Freemasonry_and_the_Temple)

<https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/ask-the-apologist-similarities-between-masonic-and-mormon-temple-ritual>

<http://mit.irr.org/occultic-and-masonic-influence-in-early-mormonism>

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_temples/Endowment/Freemasonry](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_temples/Endowment/Freemasonry)

<https://gospeltangents.com/2017/04/10/evolution-of-temple-worship-from-speaking-in-tongues-to-masonry/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLQMxmP-C1o>

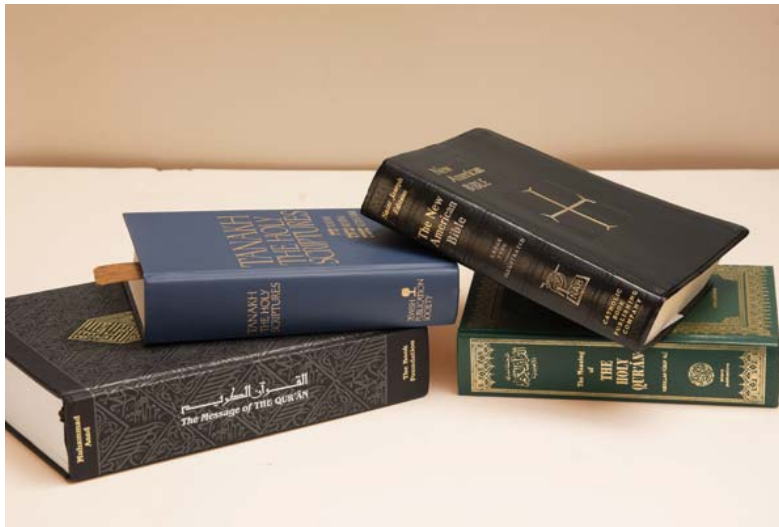
[http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/mormonism\\_and\\_masonry-s\\_h\\_goodwin.pdf](http://www.salamandersociety.com/library/mormonism_and_masonry-s_h_goodwin.pdf)

<http://www.utlm.org/onlineresources/masonicsymbolsandtheldstemple.htm>

[http://www.shields-research.org/General/LDS\\_Leaders/1stPres/Ivins-Anthony\\_W/Relationship\\_Mormonism\\_Masonry/020Chap15.PDF](http://www.shields-research.org/General/LDS_Leaders/1stPres/Ivins-Anthony_W/Relationship_Mormonism_Masonry/020Chap15.PDF)

<http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/review/17/1/S00003-5176abb50dfd22Literski.pdf>

<http://w.mormonismi.net/pdf/homer1994.pdf>



## **Chapter 16 : Scripture**

### **Orthodox View:**

The Orthodox perspective holds that the scriptures are the literal Word of God. That these are God's words spoken to prophets directly with the instructions to then write these words down for later readers. Latter-day Saints apply this framework to the Book of Mormon and other Restoration Scripture. They also grant such to the Old and New Testament with the caveat that many errors found their way into the Holy Bible due to multiple translations. Even allowing folks with corrupt religious motives to have altered the sacred book for their own selfish purposes and that such alterations contaminated portions of the Word of God. It should be noted as well that the Orthodox views sees a discernable difference between LDS scripture and the sacred texts of the world. That LDS Canon (Bible, Book of Mormon, Doctrine & Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price) is of God and is "real" scripture, while the sacred texts of other traditions only put themselves forward as scripture or truly containing God's voice. That in reality, these other texts considered sacred by other faiths are counterfeit and do not lead to salvation. It is also important to note that when it comes to historicity of LDS Canon, the Orthodox view takes a strong stand on the historicity of the events contained therein. Generally, Latter-day Saints hold these stories to be literal throughout. Noah truly built a boat that got him and his family through a global flood, Adam and Eve were in a literal Garden partaking of literal fruit, Jonah was literally swallowed by a whale, and the Brother of Jared had eight real barges with literal stones touched by the literal finger of God to light the way. Latter-day Saints also generally hold that any action attributed to God in scripture is God's doing. That if it says God in his anger committed genocide against a people, then so be it. That if Abraham heard God's voice commanding him to kill his son or Nephi heard God's voice to cut

off someone's head, then so be it. That such stories represent the literal wishes and behaviors of God and that it is our responsibility to avoid doubting and questioning such requests and simply obey God's command. That scriptures are there to inform us of God expectations, what He requires, and what He will do if we obey, as well as what He will do if we reject His command and counsel.

### Critical View:

The Critic of Scripture points out that many of these stories are mythical fables created to help a people in a certain time develop an identity and a sense of importance in the World. They point out that even the stories with some historical basis are most assuredly embellished and made to seem larger than life.<sup>139</sup> That whenever people have struggled to understand why something happens, a god is always brought into the picture to explain such.<sup>140</sup> That such is the nature of oral tradition throughout World History and that we should not expect less here. The Critic senses the harmful behavior of basing one's decisions of morality on fables. That in the extreme if one hears the voice of God telling them to kill someone, that it is deeply unethical to carry it through because one has been taught to trust such a voice as the Word of God rather than to question one's own sanity. In lesser examples, the Critic would suggest that to treat groups of people who are different than you (those of a different: Race, Gender, Religion, Sexual Identity, etc...) as less than your group (The Chosen people of God) is to overreach on the reality of scripture. That to assume God is really speaking directly in these instances and that such statements reflect His motives imposes a 'Us vs Them' mentality that misses the mark of what scripture is and isn't.<sup>141</sup> That scripture is made of Men imposing their imperfect views as the voice of God and that following such views with unquestioning obedience has led to much of the harm, hurt, trauma, and damage of individuals and groups of people throughout history.<sup>142</sup>

### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view suggests that some parts where there are deep conflicts with science and logic must be interpreted differently so as to be reconciled. That these may in fact be figurative

---

<sup>139</sup> [http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/documents/Absurdities\\_of\\_the\\_Bible\\_Darrow\\_OCR\\_OPT.pdf](http://moses.law.umn.edu/darrow/documents/Absurdities_of_the_Bible_Darrow_OCR_OPT.pdf)

<sup>140</sup> [https://www.whitehorsemedia.com/docs/futurisms\\_gap\\_fable.pdf](https://www.whitehorsemedia.com/docs/futurisms_gap_fable.pdf)

<sup>141</sup> <https://www.sbl-site.org/assets/pdfs/pubs/060378P-front.pdf>

<sup>142</sup> <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/31885/31885-h/31885-h.htm>

or allegorical or in some rare instances even a mistake.<sup>143</sup> It also suggests that there is some distortion of God's word as it is transmitted through imperfect beings.<sup>144</sup> This view would also grant that at times The Lord's chosen servants have made errors in interpreting and recording God's word.<sup>145</sup> With that said, they would also impose that we see God as the person in charge and that it is Him who allows these imperfections to occur. That while a teaching of a prophet in or out of scripture may be incorrect, that it is up to God to fix it and it is God who must be seen as allowing such imperfection to exist, and that it is not our place to seek correction of such things, but rather to wait in patience upon the Lord to do so in His own due time. Also where there are not deep conflicts with science or logic, the Apologetic view maintains space for a literal view. Where there is no contradiction and no proof a literal perspective must shift, the apologist sees no reason to give up any ground on interpretation or ground on historicity.

### Progressive View :

Some Progressive perspectives validate all the concerns the critic raises. That scripture contains much in way of mythical fable. That we have overreached on interpreting much of these sacred texts as literal stories. That many of these stories were transmitted from generation to generation over hundreds if not thousands of years through oral tradition and that the nature of such combined with the lack of verifiable history imposes that many, if not most of these stories, just like all other similar stories through history, have been most likely made up. That they are at best highly embellished to the point they would be barely recognizable when compared to the actual people and events as they occurred. That said, the Progressive Latter-day Saint still understands these texts as Scripture.<sup>146</sup> The Progressive would argue that a literal interpretation is the interpretation with the least amount of value.<sup>147</sup> That it is when we set aside the discussion of literal or not that we get to the more important spiritual truths.<sup>148</sup> That discussing whether the garden of Eden was real or not misses the mark and misses out on an opportunity to discuss deeper truths that lie just below the surface. That these deeper truths get lost when the focus is on literalness. Progressive Latter-day Saints sustain the Holy Bible and Restoration Scripture as Sacred Holy writ to which they and their community are bound. But they also grant that other sacred texts in the World, that are valued by other faith traditions, are also Scripture. Scripture in the same sense as our Sacred

---

<sup>143</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Book\\_of\\_Mormon/Lamanites/Curse/What\\_was\\_it](http://en.fairmormon.org/Book_of_Mormon/Lamanites/Curse/What_was_it)

<sup>144</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_doctrine/Prophets\\_are\\_not\\_infallible](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_doctrine/Prophets_are_not_infallible)

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2013/10/come-join-with-us?lang=eng>

<sup>146</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/when-a-sacred-text-is-not-so-much-the-word-of-god-as-the-word-of-man-8163653.html>

<sup>147</sup> <https://bible.org/article/taking-bible-literally>

<sup>148</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-lose/4-good-reasons-not-to-read-bible-literally\\_b\\_919345.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-lose/4-good-reasons-not-to-read-bible-literally_b_919345.html)

Texts. That God is using multiple avenues to draw His children to Him and to bring them home. The Progressive recognizes that as a faith community, we have accepted LDS scriptural texts as binding to us while still appreciating the sacred texts of other faith communities. The Progressive Latter-day Saints sees scriptural value in the Koran, Bhagavad Gita, the Dhammapada for example.<sup>149</sup> The Progressive view might at times even go so far as to see the writings of C.S. Lewis, Nietzsche, and others as having a sort of scriptural value. The Progressive feels no disloyalty for searching for truth outside of his own faith tradition within the writings and sacred texts of the World. They see truth regardless of where it was discovered and find the search for truth within or outside one's faith community to be at the core of Mormonism. And when they find said truth within such writings, it enlightens their minds and connects them to the divine and for them that is scripture in its purest form.

### Resources For Personal Research

<http://www.churchistrue.com/blog/book-of-mormon-modern-expansion-theory-midrash/>

<https://wheatandtares.org/2016/08/02/multireading-scriptures/>

<http://www.churchistrue.com/blog/new-mormonism-scripture-and-authority/>

<https://bycommonconsent.com/2006/11/27/wresting/>

<http://www.newsroom.lds.org/ldsnewsroom/eng/commentary/reverence-for-the-bible>

---

<sup>149</sup> [http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/23/jbms23-spencer-essay\\_christ-krishna.pdf](http://publications.mi.byu.edu/publications/jbms/23/jbms23-spencer-essay_christ-krishna.pdf)



## **Chapter 17 : Race based Priesthood and Temple ban**

### **Orthodox View:**

The Orthodox view holds that the Race and Temple ban of those of color was instituted by God. That while it may seem racist or bigoted to the outside world, that God had withheld priesthood from black males and temple ordinances from black males and females. That Prophets, Seers, and Revelators throughout this dispensation have exclaimed that those of color had brought this restriction upon themselves through a lack of valiancy in the premortal life.<sup>150</sup> And on top of that, if anyone of any other color mixed seed with them that they would bring the judgement of God upon them and their posterity. While the Church in 2014 came out with its “Race and the Priesthood” gospel topic essay<sup>151</sup> disavowing as racist theories, the past teachings of Church leaders who taught such things as Doctrine, the reality is that very few members have been directed to the essays and encouraged to wrestle with the false Doctrine taught by Leaders in the past.<sup>152</sup> This has the Orthodox view continuing to be held and even perpetuated.

### **Critical View :**

The Critical view would raise awareness that while current leaders paint the statements of past church leaders as “Theories”, the reality is that those leaders of the past framed those

<sup>150</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/blacks.htm>

<sup>151</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>152</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng&old=true>

teachings as “Doctrine”<sup>153</sup> and said as much both privately<sup>154</sup> and publicly<sup>155</sup>. That leaders like former President of the Church George Albert Smith, who was adamant that those of color were cursed, had been less valiant in the pre-mortal life, and that inter-racial marriage being sin, were all eternal doctrines. His First Presidency stated as much both in private correspondences<sup>156</sup>, as well as in public Church statements<sup>157</sup>. The Critical view would want a conversation to be held on how we are to know truth by the Holy Ghost when the members of church in the past knew by the Holy Ghost that such “false doctrines” were “true Doctrines”. How can present leaders today be certain they have attained the mind and will of God when past Leaders thought they had attained the same mind and will of God only to be wrong and to have imposed racist theories as “True Doctrine”. They would point to the idea that of just how wrong leaders can be even in the midst of “knowing “ they are right with certainty and just how wrong the members can be to believe those leaders. That once we see such fallibility, then we have to get a whole lot more vulnerable with just how fallible the Church, its leaders, and its members are in discerning the mind and will of God. They would also point out on this issue, like so many other social issues, the Church seems to always adapt its Doctrine and Policies to conform closer to where the world is moving on such issues. That in other words, the Church has a history of holding conservative social Ground. That the World at one time held a similar view on such issues. That as the world slowly progressed to a more inclusive view, the Church gave resistance and held that the World was becoming more accepting of sin. This entrenching would pervade for decades only to get more in line with the World’s view once the discrepancy became so large that it was hurting the Church’s image and progress. That such shifts on polygamy<sup>158</sup>, women’s rights<sup>159</sup>, birth control<sup>160</sup>, mental health issues and beliefs on suicide<sup>161</sup>, issues of race<sup>162</sup>, all involved entrenching on a position only to eventually change its stance once the divide between the World and the Church became too big. While still early, we are seeing in our day, there has begun to be shifts on the perceived causes of and policies surrounding LGBT issues<sup>163</sup>, and that in time we will see acceptance of this issue as another evidence of the Church’s own recognition of its struggle to discern truth ahead of the world.

<sup>153</sup> [http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry\\_Nelson\\_1st\\_Presidency\\_Exchange.pdf](http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry_Nelson_1st_Presidency_Exchange.pdf)

<sup>154</sup> [http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry\\_Nelson\\_1st\\_Presidency\\_Exchange.pdf](http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry_Nelson_1st_Presidency_Exchange.pdf)

<sup>155</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_racial\\_issues/Blacks\\_and\\_the\\_priesthood/Statements](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_racial_issues/Blacks_and_the_priesthood/Statements)

<sup>156</sup> [http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry\\_Nelson\\_1st\\_Presidency\\_Exchange.pdf](http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry_Nelson_1st_Presidency_Exchange.pdf)

<sup>157</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_racial\\_issues/Blacks\\_and\\_the\\_priesthood/Statements](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_racial_issues/Blacks_and_the_priesthood/Statements)

<sup>158</sup> [https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V18N01\\_11.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V18N01_11.pdf)

<sup>159</sup> <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/39004/GeorgeJulieA2013.pdf;sequence>

<sup>160</sup> [www.timesandseasons.org/harchive/2005/05/comparing-the-evolution-of-two-church-policies-birth-control-and-women-working-outside-the-home/](http://www.timesandseasons.org/harchive/2005/05/comparing-the-evolution-of-two-church-policies-birth-control-and-women-working-outside-the-home/)

<sup>161</sup> [www.heraldextra.com/news/local/church-teachings-on-suicide-have-changed-through-the-years/article\\_ff35e8c9-2c8d-5a57-8fa4-adb635bbe1f0.html](http://www.heraldextra.com/news/local/church-teachings-on-suicide-have-changed-through-the-years/article_ff35e8c9-2c8d-5a57-8fa4-adb635bbe1f0.html)

<sup>162</sup> <http://www.mormonstories.org/other/DispellingtheCurseofCain.pdf>

<sup>163</sup> <https://mormonlgbtquestions.files.wordpress.com/2017/04/an-examination-of-the-lds-church-position-on-hs.pdf>



## Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view would make the argument that leaders in the past may have conflated words like policy, principle, belief and doctrine at times.<sup>164</sup> That though they would validate that past leaders did indeed call past teachings “Doctrine”, that we should grant them charity that, had they known their words would be scrutinized, they may have chosen another word in the place of Doctrine.<sup>165</sup> The Apologetic view also offers that we as a people may have misunderstood themes within scripture that we attributed to race. That in fact when it speaks of skin color within the Book of Mormon, that it might in fact only be speaking allegorically of unrighteousness so that skin color doesn’t actually mean skin color.<sup>166</sup> That the racial attitudes of one’s culture plays into how past leaders in their day evaluated ideas based on the limited understanding of that day. That we should expect Brigham Young to hold racist views while living in a racist culture.<sup>167</sup> That we should expect past leaders to interpret scriptures intended to be understood allegorically with literal eyes. The Apologetic view also suggests that while the Church does seem in at least some ways to play catch up with society on social issues, that there is a faithful framing for such. That these men are bound to hold the doctrine and protect the Church from having God’s way of doing things from being corrupted. Hence, whenever an issue arises where the World begins to see an issue very differently, we should expect hesitancy, and perhaps resistance and even defensiveness as they take their time to discuss and think about such issues, their repercussions, and the far reaching effects. Having issues in one’s culture that encourage one to ask questions they had never considered before does not diminish one from being a Prophet. Instead, we should look to the scriptures and how prophets within scripture have had to encounter a problem first and react after the problem arises in working out a solution and or reconciliation between them and the Lord.

## Progressive View :

The Progressive Perspective honors that Church leaders make mistakes, and at times, have a deep fallibility. That they are capable of making serious mistakes that hurt, marginalize, and harm others needlessly. This view would validate that how past leaders understood Race was one of those. The Progressive view would validate that regardless of whether one is a Church leader or a lay member, that ascertaining the mind and will of God is messy and problematic.

---

<sup>164</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_doctrine](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_doctrine)

<sup>165</sup> [http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_doctrine/Prophets\\_are\\_not\\_infallible](http://en.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_doctrine/Prophets_are_not_infallible)

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/what-does-the-book-of-mormon-mean-by-skin-of-blackness>

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/conference/august-2014/shouldering-the-cross>

That on this issue and many others, it might help to hear the words of Elder Bruce R. McConkie when he stated:

*I do not know all of the providences of the Lord, but I do know that he permits false doctrine to be taught in and out of the Church and that such teaching is part of the sifting process of mortality - Bruce R McConkie*<sup>168</sup>

It adds insight to know that Elder McConkie was referring to Brigham Young's teaching of a false Doctrine regarding the nature of God. That he isn't speaking of false Doctrine among the membership, but rather among the Prophets, Seers, and Revelators and specifically the President of the Church. That we may need adjusted expectations of what it means to be a Prophet and what the limitations are of those who hold such callings. We should be careful not to set a bar of expectations so high that when these men sin or they err, we lose faith in them and/or in God. In terms of the race issue specifically, that we see that how we spoke about and framed race in the past is no longer part of our current perspective. That for instance, we recognize the following specific statements made about race and skin color from the Church

*"During Joseph Smith's lifetime, a few black male members of the Church were ordained to the priesthood. Early in its history, Church leaders stopped conferring the priesthood on black males of African descent. Church records offer no clear insights into the origins of this practice." - Heading to Official Declaration 2 in the D&C*<sup>169</sup>

And

*Today, the Church disavows the theories advanced in the past that black skin is a sign of divine disfavor or curse, or that it reflects unrighteous actions in a premortal life; that mixed-race marriages are a sin; or that blacks or people of any other race or ethnicity are inferior in any way to anyone else. Church leaders today unequivocally condemn all racism, past and present, in any form. - LDS Gospel Topic Essay "Race and The Priesthood"*<sup>170</sup>

### Resources For Personal Research

<https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng&old=true>

<http://elarsen.net/ldsbc/misc/Revelation%20of%201978,%20Edward%20L%20Kimball.pdf>

[http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry\\_Nelson\\_1st\\_Presidency\\_Exchange.pdf](http://www.mormonstories.org/other/Lowry_Nelson_1st_Presidency_Exchange.pdf)

[http://pt.fairmormon.org/Mormonism\\_and\\_racial\\_issues/Blacks\\_and\\_the\\_priesthood/Origin\\_of\\_the\\_priesthood\\_ban](http://pt.fairmormon.org/Mormonism_and_racial_issues/Blacks_and_the_priesthood/Origin_of_the_priesthood_ban)

<http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/pdfnewsletters/118saltlakecitymessenger.pdf>

---

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.mmm.org/bruce-mcconkies-rebuke-of-eugene-england>

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.lds.org/scriptures/dc-testament/od/2>

<sup>170</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/race-and-the-priesthood?lang=eng&old=true>

[http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/race\\_in\\_brazil.pdf](http://www.mormonismi.net/pdf/race_in_brazil.pdf)

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V14N03\\_12.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_12.pdf)

[http://www.uvu.edu/religiousstudies/docs/2017\\_msc/janan\\_graham\\_russell.pdf](http://www.uvu.edu/religiousstudies/docs/2017_msc/janan_graham_russell.pdf)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/blackweb.htm>

[https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue\\_V14N03\\_12.pdf](https://www.dialoguejournal.com/wp-content/uploads/sbi/articles/Dialogue_V14N03_12.pdf)

<http://www.mormonstories.org/other/DispellingtheCurseofCain.pdf>



Artist: Rob Colvin

## **Chapter 18 : Spiritual Witness as a Mode of Knowing Truth**

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox view holds that spiritual truth can only be known through the Holy Ghost, and that while the world will try to complicate things, one can know the truth of all things through the power of the Holy Ghost.<sup>171</sup> There may be ambiguous issues in Church history and/or we may assume with our limited view that something was a mistake, but in the end we can know the truth from error through the Spirit. The Orthodox view will sometimes dismiss or ignore what others perceive as problems or contradictions. They accomplish this by stating they know by the Spirit that said thing is true, hence, any perceived contradiction or problem simply would not be a problem if we had all available information.<sup>172</sup> This view would suggest that the Spirit is a far more accurate and trustworthy way at knowing the things of God than any other means. That any discovered truth by other means is less credible and less important than that truth known by the Holy Ghost. This mode of operation allows the Orthodox member to dismiss scholarship and data when there is a conflict between such and their sacred beliefs.

### Critical View :

The Critical view imposes that spiritual experiences are a completely ineffective way to know truth. The Critic shows many evidences for such. We will list a few. First, that people of all

---

<sup>171</sup> <https://www.lds.org/topics/holy-ghost?lang=eng&old=true>

<sup>172</sup> <https://www.lds.org/general-conference/2004/10/be-not-deceived?lang=eng>

faiths record receiving an answer that their belief system is true and they know such through an answer to a prayer, a peaceful feeling in their heart, and/or by the power of the Holy Ghost that their belief system is the right one and approved by God.<sup>173</sup> People join religious groups everyday, that our culture generally esteems unhealthy or abusive, due to a spiritual experience and that demonstrable great harm and even death befell these folks.<sup>174</sup> The Critic would ask how we account for that. The Critic would also suggest that there are plenty of examples of LDS members believing something to be true from the Holy Ghost, only to find out later that such item was actually untrue and they would ask how to account for that<sup>175</sup>. This view would point out also that many of the members of the break-off churches from the LDS faith (Fundamentalist and other restoration branches) describe and share their testimony in exactly the same fashion that LDS members do.<sup>176</sup> How do we reconcile an untrue testimony and untrue spiritual experience with a true testimony and true experience when they look identical and are expressed the same? That even if we grant that, Satan can conjure up counterfeit experiences and those experiences are so similar as to be convincing to those who have them. How then do we know our LDS experiences are not among the counterfeit?

#### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view would argue that there are several responses to such a criticism. That the Holy Ghost may lead an individual to a place other than Mormonism as a stepping stone on the path, but that Mormonism is the most advanced stepping stone. The Apologetic view may argue at times that while those of other faiths are having spiritual experiences, that the LDS experience is in some discernible way different.<sup>177</sup> The Apologetic view would also seek to make the reader aware, that while some faiths have members who seek to know the truth of their belief system through spiritual experience, that far and wide most religious communities do not. For example, one who is attending a local methodist Church might pray to know if this is the best congregation for them and their family, but they are likely not to pray about methodism generally as the “true” religion. The Apologetic view would completely uphold that one can, and many do know, that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s only “True and Living Church” upon the Earth and that regardless of the issues raised above that one can know these things by the power of the Holy Ghost and many testify that they do.

---

<sup>173</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwkh\\_aliF3E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwkh_aliF3E)

<sup>174</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven%27s\\_Gate\\_\(religious\\_group\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heaven%27s_Gate_(religious_group))

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.mormonthink.com/QUOTES/adamgod.htm>

<sup>176</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBVnsOEvd-I>

<sup>177</sup> <https://www.fairmormon.org/archive/publications/can-we-trust-our-feelings>

## Progressive View :

The Progressive perspective would validate that people all across the world from various walks of life and belief systems have very deep and profound spiritual experiences. That for some these experiences indicate the truthfulness of their Church or belief system and that their experiences are just as valid as those answers received within a Mormon context. The Progressive view would also acknowledge that spiritual experiences not only lead people into the LDS faith, but also lead them out, and such experiences should not be discounted. The Progressive view would see the use of a spiritual experience to determine absolute truth of a historical event or to know with certainty one is right and another wrong as overreaching. For the Progressive viewpoint, reaching absolute truth is a lifelong journey.<sup>178</sup> The Progressive view appreciates combining multiple tools like logic, science, and study along with spiritual practices like faith, meditation, and prayer to help one to reach new discoveries and new insights. One holding a Progressive view also realizes that a new experience tomorrow may dramatically shift what one knows to be true today. One Progressive view has been put forth that Truth is better discovered through scientific methodologies and that Spiritual methods are better for connecting to beauty and goodness.<sup>179</sup>

## Resources For Personal Research

[http://en.fairmormon.org/Holy\\_Ghost/Burning\\_in\\_the\\_bosom](http://en.fairmormon.org/Holy_Ghost/Burning_in_the_bosom)

<http://www.mormonthink.com/testimonyweb.htm>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwkh\\_alif3E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwkh_alif3E)

<http://www.tektonics.org/gk/insidejob.php>

<http://zelphontheshelf.com/i-bear-my-testimony-that-the-holy-ghost-is-broken/>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation\\_bias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confirmation_bias)

[http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Backfire\\_effect](http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/Backfire_effect)

<http://www.jakeshealthsolutions.com/you-cant-handle-the-truth-how-confirmation-bias-distorts-your-opinions-4143>

<https://mormonbandwagon.com/bwv549/testimony-spiritual-experiences-truth-careful-examination/>

---

<sup>178</sup> <https://mormonbandwagon.com/bwv549/testimony-spiritual-experiences-truth-careful-examination/>

<sup>179</sup> <http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/09/when-mormons-doubt/>



## **Chapter 19 : Historical Jesus**

### Orthodox View :

The Orthodox view holds that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were eyewitnesses to the life and ministry of Jesus. That all four gospels are consistent and corroborate each other. The Orthodox view holds that all the stories told in the scriptures are historically accurate and a representation of the actual life of Jesus of Nazareth.

### Critical View :

The Critical view holds that the Four Gospel accounts were written much later than the Orthodox position had assumed. That Mark is written about 70 AD, Matthew and Luke around 80AD independent of each other, but borrowing from Mark to formulate their narrative, and John is written around 100 AD.<sup>180</sup> That these are 2 to 4 generations removed from the actual life of Christ. That there is no historical evidence these accounts were written by the people later Christians attributed them to. That there are numerous contradictions regarding whether events occurred, the order of those events, the nature of the Savior's miracles, and even the personality of Jesus.<sup>181</sup> The Critical view points out the serious scholarship here recognizes that the four gospels are not consistent and contradict each other so much that there are very few things we can say safely about the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Herod's killing of the First born is likely a fictional myth based on scholarship.<sup>182</sup> Jesus family fleeing into Egypt is

<sup>180</sup> <https://carm.org/when-were-gospels-written-and-by-whom>

<sup>181</sup> <http://www.biblicalcatholic.com/apologetics/ShreddingTheGospels.htm>

<sup>182</sup> Paul L. Maier, "Herod and the Infants of Bethlehem", in *Chronos, Kairos, Christos II*, Mercer University Press (1998), p.170

likely a fictional myth based on scholarship. Mark and Luke do not agree on the nativity story to the degree that their stories can not be reconciled.<sup>183</sup> Mark and John paint a very different Jesus, with Mark having him be humble, quiet, and reserved; and John having him declaring his divinity in the streets from the beginning of his ministry to the end. That almost everything we thought we knew about Jesus is up for grabs once we are willing to accept the data.

### Apologetic View :

The Apologetic view validates the approximate dating of the writers of the four gospels by scholars as entirely possible. They also validate these other concerns, but they point to the Book of Mormon and why this second witness is so important. That when we see the Book of Mormon as a second witness, we can take comfort in the things both the New Testament and the Book of Mormon agree on. That both books witness together that Christ is the Son of God, they witness of his crucifixion and his resurrection, his birth, and even witness of some of the specifics of his teaching. That once we know the Book of Mormon is true, we need not be uneasy about the small details that lie outside these mutually testified items as such details are inconsequential.<sup>184</sup>

### Progressive View :

The Progressive view accepts the general premise of the Scholarship. That much of what is contained in the four gospels is in fact inconsistent and at times contradicting. The Progressive view already has an adjusted framing on issues like Book of Mormon Historicity (Chapter 4) and on Scripture (Chapter 16) generally, that they have already created a nuanced space for belief on the Historical Jesus. This view does not feel compelled to accept a “Virgin Birth” as necessarily historical. The same with any specific detail within Christ’s life and ministry. Some Progressive views even reframe in more mystical ways, events like the Crucifixion and Resurrection, to the extent that these particular items need not be forced into a literal interpretation. In the end though, the Progressive would agree that the specifics like the Crucifixion, Atonement, and Resurrection and more generally that Jesus of Nazareth was truly the Son of God who made an atonement for mankind are truly matters of faith. That there simply is not enough data available for the critic to completely dispel these. So with such an understanding, Progressive Latter-day Saints move forward reducing their focus on the need

---

<sup>183</sup> <http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies/rfst-152>

<sup>184</sup> <http://www.ldsperspectives.com/2016/09/19/episode-1-historical-jesus/>



for these events to be literal and historical and instead focus on the Grace, Mercy, and the Power that a life dedicated to the Christ of Faith has to change and empower their lives.

### Resources For Personal Research

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-1-gospel-mark/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-2-gospel-q/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-3-gospel-mathew/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-4-gospel-luke/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-5-gospel-john/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2016/12/premium-historical-jesus-pt-6-conclusion/>

<http://www.sunypress.edu/pdf/53771.pdf>

[http://www.wmktradio.com/files/HistoricalJesusMythicalChrist\\_GMassey.pdf](http://www.wmktradio.com/files/HistoricalJesusMythicalChrist_GMassey.pdf)

[http://www.wtsbooks.com/common/pdf\\_links/9780830838684.pdf](http://www.wtsbooks.com/common/pdf_links/9780830838684.pdf)

<http://www.thefishersofmenministries.com/The%20Quest%20of%20the%20Historical%20Jesus.pdf>

<http://www.crivoice.org/synoptic.html>

<http://www.tonyburke.ca/wp-content/uploads/Burton-Macks-Q-Text.pdf>

<http://cdn.bakerpublishinggroup.com/processed/esource-assets/files/775/original/hyperlink-04-06.pdf?1417381813>

<https://rsc.byu.edu/archived/historicity-and-latter-day-saint-scriptures/8-historical-jesus-latter-day-saint-perspective>

<http://www.bu.edu/religion/files/pdf/My-Quest-for-the-Historical-Jesus.pdf>

<http://www.religion.emory.edu/faculty/robbins/Pdfs/TheissenJesus.pdf>

<http://www.stellarhousepublishing.com/originsofchristianity.pdf>

<https://www.dbts.edu/pdf/macp/2011/Compton%20J,%20Quest%20for%20Historical%20Jesus.pdf>

[http://craigaeans.com/Third\\_Quest.rev.pdf](http://craigaeans.com/Third_Quest.rev.pdf)

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/historical-jesus/id384233911?mt=10>

[https://archive.org/details/Religions\\_of\\_the\\_Ancient\\_Mediterranean](https://archive.org/details/Religions_of_the_Ancient_Mediterranean)

<http://oyc.yale.edu/religious-studies>

<https://progressivespirit.net/?s=historical+jesus>

<http://www.mormonmatters.org/2013/12/31/208-who-was-jesus/>

<http://www.mormondiscussionpodcast.org/2014/10/david-bokovoy-historical-jesus/>

<http://mormonsundayschool.org/077-the-historical-jesus/>

<https://www.fairmormon.org/blog/2016/09/22/historical-jesus>

This is a living document where edits and addendums are welcome and will occur. Any revision suggestions can be emailed to [reelmormon@gmail.com](mailto:reelmormon@gmail.com). For the most current copy of this document please go to [mormondiscussionpodcast.org](http://mormondiscussionpodcast.org) and search for Mormon Primer